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# Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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## POLL RESULTS

Do you practice recycling at home?

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No 23

Sunday, April 04, 2010

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Now that the iPad is in the hands of early adopters, the hard work for Apple Inc. begins.

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### No Effect

Small taxes on soda do little to reduce soft drink consumption or prevent childhood obesity, but larger levies probably would.

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### Booboo For Badu

Neosoul singer Erykah Badu faces a disorderly conduct charge for her nude music video shoot in downtown Dallas' Dealey Plaza.

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## Eight cost-cutting measures, adjustments in budget plan

» Fital: \$132M budget proposal for FY2011 includes work hour cuts, unpaid holidays, other adjustments

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO  
haidee\_eugenio@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

## RELATED NEWS

House adopts resolution on revised \$137M budget for FY 2010 **PAGE 2**



Fital

Gov. Benigno R. Fital said inherent in his \$132 million budget submission for Fiscal Year 2011 are considerations for eight cost-cutting measures

and adjustments that include a 10-hour work hour reduction per pay period, 14 unpaid legal holidays, a 25 percent cut in "all other" funds

for non-essential services, and removal of all non-essential vacant and zero-funded positions. **See GOVT on Page 4**

### FITAL'S BUDGET REQUESTS FOR AGENCIES

Department of Public Health	\$32,430,196	39 percent
Department of Public Safety	\$7,969,401	10 percent
Department of Corrections	\$2,299,645	3 percent
Division of Youth Services	\$678,920	1 percent
Public School System	\$30,132,022	36 percent
Northern Marianas College	\$4,788,464	6 percent
Marianas Visitors Authority	\$5,394,635	6 percent

## 'More than half of PSS budget did not go directly to students'

By MONETH G. DEPOSA  
moneth\_deposa@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

More than 50 percent of \$71 million budget of the Public School System in fiscal year 2010 did go directly to schoolchildren.

This was disclosed last Thursday

by Gov. Benigno R. Fital during his budget conference with the mayors of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

He described as "nonsense" the idea of allocating more money for PSS knowing that most of it didn't directly go to the students' needs in the first place.

**See MORE on Page 4**

## Japan mayor, two lawmakers to visit Tinian for Futenma relocation talks

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO  
haidee\_eugenio@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

A Japanese mayor and two lawmakers will be visiting Tinian on Thursday as part of an ongoing push in Japan to relocate thousands of troops from the U.S.

Marine Corps Station Futenma in Okinawa to an outside location, including the CNMI island of Tinian.

Two-thirds of land on Tinian is leased to the U.S. military.

Tinian Mayor Ramon Dela Cruz, Sen-

**See MAYOR on Page 4**



### EASTER SUNDAY

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Capital Hill's famous tree trunk sports an Easter bunny costume in time for Easter Sunday yesterday. Inset photo shows Kathy Deng, 10, with some of the 28 Easter eggs she found during yesterday's Easter Sunday activities for some 75 children at the Fiesta Resort & Spa in Garapan. Deng gathered the most number of Easter eggs, while Heleyna Frielle Dela Santa, 2, found the golden egg.

**See story on Page 6**

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# Local

## House adopts resolution on revised \$137M budget for FY 2010

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO  
haideee\_eugenio@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Rep. Ray N. Yumul (R-Saipan)

### Rota Forum: 'Meet Your Policy Maker'

On behalf of CNMI disability organizations, individuals with disabilities and their families, the CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities will sponsor a forum titled "Meet Your Policy Maker" on the island of Rota.

Rota's Forum is scheduled for Friday, April 9, 2010, at the Rota Round House from 9am to 2pm and the panelists are members from the Rota Legislative Delegation.

The purpose of the forum is

introduced on Wednesday a concurrent resolution to reflect Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's recent budget revision for Fiscal Year

2010 from \$150 million to \$137 million that resulted in a 7.25 percent across-the-board reduction in agencies' budget.

to attend this event.

Interested individuals requesting special accommodations are asked to notify the CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities at least three days in advance of their special accommodations needs. This will give the organizers ample time to coordinate and provide the accommodation.

For more information, contact CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities Office at 664-7000/7001/7002. (PR)

for individuals with disabilities to educate CNMI policy makers about disability issues in the CNMI. This forum will give individuals with disabilities and their family members an opportunity to provide their input on needs of persons with disabilities in the CNMI in the areas of education, transportation, and housing.

Consumers, family members, members of CNMI disability organizations, and CNMI stakeholders are invited

The resolution was adopted a day before Fitial submitted to the Legislature his budget proposal for FY 2011 of \$132 million. (See related story)

House Concurrent Resolution 17-1 amends HCR 16-4 to reduce the government revenues and resources as the governor transmitted to the Legislature for FY 2010.

In a March 9, 2010 letter to the 17th Legislature, Fitial revised the projected budgetary resources to \$149.67 million,

\$137 million of which is available for appropriation for CNMI government activities until Sept. 30, 2010.

Yumul's three-page resolution, co-sponsored by eight other House members, urges the governor to submit a report as soon as possible setting forth any amendments or changes to the budget, including revenues and expenditures to date for FY 2010, any policy changes proposed since the April 1, 2009 submittal of the budget

proposal, and other significant factors affecting the budget for FY 2010.

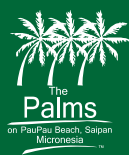
Under Fitial's revised FY 2010 budget, the total identified budgetary resource is \$149.67 million, \$12.32 million of which are for debt service or bond payment, and other obligations such as for tobacco control and solid waste.

The remaining \$137.35 million is to the total local revenue and resources available for appropriation for CNMI government activities in FY 2010. Department of Public Lands revenue is \$3.011 million.

### INFANT HEARING SCREENING

A newborn infant undergoes hearing-loss screening at the Commonwealth Health Center's nursery. Newborn infant hearing screening programs are designed to identify hearing loss in infants shortly after birth.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



## Specials & Theme Nights

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# Buckingham respects Doromal's opinion on PL 17-1

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
ferdie\_deltorre@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Attorney General Edward T. Buckingham said he respects the opinion of human rights advocate Wendy Doromal who described the alien registration law, or Public Law 17-1, as "discriminatory, demeaning, and outrageous."

In an interview with *Saipan Tribune*, Buckingham said he testified in support of the administration-proposed omnibus immigration bill that Gov. Benigno Fitial recently signed into Public Law 17-1.

"I recommended to the governor that he sign it. I respect that others may have a different opinion and I am grateful to live in a country where we can respectfully disagree," the AG said.

In her recent blog, Doromal said P.L. 17-1 appears to be the CNMI government's blatant attempt to maintain its "broken local system and control over the disenfranchised underclass."

"The provision for national IDs is both outrageous and demeaning. It shows a great disrespect for the foreign nationals. The punishment of jail time and a costly fine of \$500

for not having the ID in their personal possession of control at all times is unconscionable," Doromal said.

She also questioned whether the police officers or Labor officials will be enforcing the law by stopping alien workers in the streets, restaurants, and shops and demanding to see their CNMI-issued IDs.

Doromal has urged alien workers and employers to unite and take legal action against the CNMI government over signing into law of the omnibus immigration bill.

"It is time to take the CNMI government to court to stop this law and the constant discrimination and retaliation of the foreign national workforce," said Doromal in her blog Unheard No More.

P.L. 17-1 asserts CNMI control over nonresident workers and removing all references to immigration and deportation from the Commonwealth Code to conform to the federalization law.

On the enforcement issue, Buckingham said rather than commenting specifically, because it is a lengthy bill, he would refer to the language in the bill that is now a law.



**Buckingham**



**Doromal**

## OAG files 7 charges against man who kicked cop

The Office of the Attorney General has filed seven charges against a 36-year-old man who allegedly kicked a police officer.

The OAG charged Joseph Jones Villagomez with three counts of assault and battery, two counts of criminal mischief, one count of disturbing the peace, and one count of resisting arrest.

Villagomez, through counsel assistant public defender Richard Miller, pleaded not guilty to all charges.

Superior Court Presiding Judge Robert C. Naraja set the status conference for May 3, 2010 at 1:30pm.

Chief Prosecutor Rosemond

Santos stated in the charging information that on Feb. 28, 2010, Villagomez kicked Police Officer Arnold Sarapio on the face, chest, and arms.

Santos said the defendant resisted when Sarapio placed him under arrest.

The chief prosecutor said Villagomez damaged the door frame of the police's cruiser.

The defendant also damaged the window cell of holding cell No. 1 in the Department of Corrections.

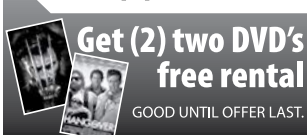
Police said when they served the warrant to Villagomez, they found 13 marijuana plants on his property in Dandan. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)

Buckingham said operational issues may be discussed with Labor Secretary Gil San Nicolas or Deputy Secretary Cinta Kaipat.

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## MAYOR

From Page 1

ate Vice President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) and Rep. Trenton Conner (R-Tinian) separately confirmed yesterday with *Saipan Tribune* that the mayor of the town where the Futenma base is located, along with two members of the Japanese Diet, will be arriving on island on April 8.

The U.S. Marine Corps Station Futenma is located in Ginowan in Okinawa, Japan. The current mayor is Yoichi Iha.

Dela Cruz said one of the two visiting Japanese lawmakers was born on Tinian.

Hofschneider, chairman of the Tinian Legislative Delegation, said the mayor requested members of the delegation and the municipal council to be on island for the Japanese officials' visit.

Dela Cruz met with an advance party for the visiting Japanese officials on Saturday night, confirming the visit.

"I told him that I cannot make an official invitation because there's already an agreement between Japan and the U.S. government and they said they understand that," Dela Cruz said in a phone interview.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial told Dela Cruz during a budget meeting on Thursday: "I cannot support any movement by Japan to use the CNMI that will go

against the federal government."

The Fitial administration has repeatedly said that the U.S. territory of the CNMI welcomes such relocation consideration "only if such plan is supported and approved by the U.S. federal government and the Department of Defense."

In recent months, Japanese officials have been visiting both Guam and the CNMI for talks related to the relocation of U.S. military personnel from Japan to the Marianas.

On Feb. 10, for example, visiting Japanese lawmakers said they may recommend the relocation of 2,000 to 4,000 U.S. troops from the aviation units at Futenma to the CNMI.

The up to 4,000 considered to be relocated to Tinian is in addition to the estimated 8,000 Marines and their 9,000 dependents who are expected to be relocated by 2014, although Guam Gov. Felix P. Camacho asked for the military buildup to be delayed until after 2014.

The Tinian mayor is supportive of plans to relocate troops to the island, saying Tinian has waited for over 30 years for such movement to help boost the economy.

In Japan, the Social Democratic Party has been reported prioritizing a plan to move the Futenma base in Okinawa out of the country. This is reportedly among the options the party is consid-

ering presenting to a government committee studying the relocation of the Futenma base.

Among the candidate sites for relocating the Futenma base are the U.S. Pacific territories of Guam or the CNMI. If it's in the CNMI, it could be on Tinian or Saipan.

However, if the overseas relocation plan proves difficult to implement, the party will push two further proposals, which include accommodating drills and bases domestically.

While the CNMI looks to economic benefits associated with the relocation of troops, it has raised concerns with the Guam-CNMI military buildup's draft environmental impact statement.

## MORE

From Page 1

"PSS received \$71 million for FY 2010...but more than 50 percent of this did not go directly to the students," Fitial told the mayors during the two-hour budget deliberation.

Fitial said because of this, he is more determined than ever to sign the austerity bill now at the Senate and not exempt PSS from the belt-tightening measures.

Most of the \$71 million received by PSS last fiscal year was sourced from federal grants.

He also expressed his frustration on PSS officials every time they "cry out loud" against budget reduction, almost saying that schoolchildren will die because of austerity measures.

In the proposed austerity bill, essential services like PSS will not be exempted from austerity holidays.

PSS has been successful in blocking the passage of the first measure last

month in the House. It, however, failed in its second attempt when the same lawmakers voted on it. The austerity bill is now at the Senate.

"Whatever the provisions of the proposed austerity measure provide, that would be the law..." Fitial told *Saipan Tribune* when asked the possibility of exempting PSS from the cut.

Board of Education chairwoman Lucy Blanco-Maratita, in an e-mail to *Saipan Tribune* yesterday, said she's not sure what the governor meant by "directly."

"As far as the governor's comments about more than half of the funds did not go directly to children, I'm not sure what he means by 'directly.' All funding received by PSS must go toward education of all children, be it directly or indirectly. There will always be funds that go into running an institution that may not necessarily 'directly' get to the students, i.e. not to books, classrooms, etc., but nonetheless go toward delivery of those educational services," she said.

As far as the governor's insistence in putting PSS under austerity, the chairwoman respects the governor's authority.

"He is the governor and perhaps has the ultimate word but again there are so many ramifications that he must consider before reducing hours for the schools. These ramifications range from the MOE violation, millions of dollars withheld for non-compliance with the MOE, return of millions of dollars already received due to non-compliance with the MOE, necessitating extending the school calendar, violation of teacher's contracts, shortening of instruction time, reduction of standards taught, elimination of after-school programs, additional obstacles to recruitment of teachers, affecting our ability to provide the special services for our children in need, to name a few. The business of education is vast, and many positions besides teachers and principals, are required to ensure that students get to school, that they are fed, the schools are safe and orderly, etc., so that each

school needs not only a principal and teachers but also teacher aides, janitors, bus drivers, clerks, counselors, and office staff, etc.," she said.

Blanco-Maratita added that if the austerity bill is passed without exemption for PSS, they will use whatever authority within the bill. PSS, she said, would also work with what they have to ensure they minimize the harsh effect the austerity bill will have on children's education.

"The CNMI Constitution is very clear in requiring that PSS, under the oversight of the BOE, provide 'maximum' educational and training opportunities with a central objective of developing human potential. This is a tall order and must have the support of everyone, including the governor and the Legislature," she added.

Blanco-Maratita vows to release the list of funds PSS received for the said fiscal years.

Based on the PSS Facts & Figures for 2009-2010, the following are the budget allocation of the school system:

\$32.491 million from local and \$34,419 million from federal grants.

Graph indicators also showed that from the local funds, 81 percent are used to pay personnel and 18 for all others.

From the federal side, only 28 percent goes to personnel cost while 72 percent goes to all others.

This fiscal year, PSS was also a recipient of the \$34 million state fiscal stabilization fund of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. The figure is good for two years.

The board earlier disclosed that non-exemption to the proposed austerity measure would result to potential loss of \$47 million in federal monies to PSS. This is on top of the contracts to teachers and vendors which maybe jeopardized because of the measure.

Under the proposed austerity bill, all departments and agencies will be reduced by 10 hours biweekly, which means reducing the instructional hours of teachers in the classrooms affecting the student learning.

## GOVT

From Page 1

Fitial submitted his budget proposal to House Speaker Froilan C. Tenorio (Cov-Saipan) and Senate President Paul A. Manglona (R-Rota) at 10pm on Thursday to meet the April 1 deadline, Press Secretary Angel Demapan told *Saipan Tribune*.

The estimated gross budgetary resource for FY 2011, which begins on Oct. 1, 2010 and ends on Sept. 31, 2011, is \$149.371 million.

Of this amount, \$132.565 million is available for appropriations.

This is \$4.765 million or 3.5 percent less than the FY 2010 mid-year revised resources estimate of some \$137.33 million.

The rest are for debt service or bond payments and other obligations, amounting to \$16.806 million.

The projected revenue for the Department of Public Lands is not yet included, as such revenues are constitutionally restricted and are not available for appropriations for general government operations.

Fitial said his proposed budget is a "balanced" one.

### Suspension continues

The governor added that the revised budget estimate for FY 2010 of \$137 million will continue in FY 2011, with the exception of \$2 million in labor fees collected in FY 2010 that are not expected to be received in FY 2011 due to the implementation of U.S. Public Law 110-229 or the federaliza-

tion law.

Fitial said the estimate's assumption of zero growth in tourist arrivals would require continued suspension of certain earmarking provisions.

These include Public Law 15-5 and 14-54 or the nonresident worker fund fees to Northern Marianas College and the Public School System, and 10 percent of gaming jackpot tax to PSS.

They also include 4 CMC 1508 (a) and (b), or 10 percent of general fund poker fees to the Human Resources Development Fund or the Workforce Investment Agency, and 50 percent to the NMI Retirement Fund.

Of the \$149.371 million in total identified budgetary resources, \$46 million or 31 percent are from business gross revenue tax, \$39.446 million or 26 percent are from income taxes, \$31.05 million or 21 percent from other taxes, \$20.545 million or 14 percent from charges for services, \$7.945 million or 5 percent from fees, and \$4.385 million or 3 percent from other revenue.

### \$65 million excess

The governor said the total amount of funding requested by departments and activities totaled \$197,842,416, exceeding the projected available resources by more than \$65 million.

He said the \$65 million budget gap "has been a difficult and daunting task."

"While I wholeheartedly support the individual activity's requests, I am mindful of the need to operate within available resources to maintain a bal-

anced budget as required under the Constitution. Accordingly, inherent in this budget submission are the following underlying assumptions and considerations," said Fitial, referring to the eight adjustments and austerity measures for FY 2011.

Fitial's proposed budget includes a \$4 million reduction in utilities cost in anticipation of savings from increased efficiency in the rehabilitation of power generation engines and energy-saving measures, and a 20 percent reduction in rentals such as for vehicles, housing, office and equipment.

It also includes a 20 percent employer contribution to the NMI Retirement Fund's Defined Benefit Plan, inclusive of a 16 percent mandatory contribution as ordered by the court and an additional 4 percent to satisfy accelerated payment to the pension system against the deficient employer contribution as determined by the court.

The last consideration is an additional 7.5 percent reduction in budget request on top of the seven other adjustments and cost cutting measures.

The governor thanked special assistant for management and budget Vicky Villagomez and her staff "for accomplishing a very difficult and challenging task of bringing the departmental and activities request down to available resources so that we can achieve a balanced budget as required by the constitution while providing necessary funds for critical public services and activities."

Fitial said after complex extrapolation of the effects of the eight re-

ductions and adjustments, the next budgetary requirement shrunk to \$137,995,443.

But this was further reduced by expenditures being absorbed by Compact Impact reimbursements and transfer of eligible expenditures into non-general fund sources amounting to \$1,930,443 and \$3.5 million, respectively.

"Accordingly, the net operating budget needed to be appropriated is \$132,565,000, an amount equal to resources available for general appropriations; hence, a balanced budget," the governor added.

### What departments get

Fitial's proposed budget includes \$32,430,196 for the Department of Public Health, which is receiving the biggest chunk or 39 percent of the budgetary resources available for appropriation.

This is followed by the Public School System's \$30,132,022 or 36 percent, and Department of Public Safety's \$7,969,401 or 10 percent.

Fitial's proposed budget for the other departments and agencies are: \$5,394,635 for the Marianas Visitors Authority, \$4,788,464 for Northern Marianas College, \$2,299,645 for the Department of Corrections, and \$678,920 for the Division of Youth Services.

These figures do not include autonomous agencies and other programs and activities not funded through general fund appropriations. Such agencies are self revenue generating and self sustaining and their budget requirements are submitted under separate

cover for information purposes.

The governor said his administration is cognizant of the opportunity to submit amendments and revisions to this budget three months prior to the beginning of the fiscal year.

He said the administration will also continue to monitor federal initiatives including recently enacted federal health care legislation, the recently approved jobs bill, as well as H.R. 4812 currently under consideration by the U.S. Congress.

"We will take full advantage of all available federal financial assistance especially those related to law enforcement programs, health services, and additional financial support for our Public School System and Northern Marianas College," Fitial told Tenorio and Manglona.

Manglona said yesterday he will still have to review the governor's budget submission before making any comment, but earlier echoed calls for a budget summit.

Fitial added that his budget submission received input and comments from the four mayors and the executive assistant for Carolinian affairs.

A recent constitutional amendment requires a shutdown of non-essential government services if no budget is passed by the start of the new fiscal year, on Oct. 1, 2010.

The same amendment calls for the suspension of the governor's salary if he fails to submit a budget proposal to the Legislature by April 1, and lawmakers' salaries would also be suspended if they fail to pass a budget before the start of the new fiscal year.



# Centralized cockfight, bingo operations eyed for Saipan

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**  
moneth\_deposa@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Mayor Donald Flores wants to establish a centralized cockfight arena and bingo houses to generate additional funding for the cash-strapped Municipality of Saipan.

The proposal comes after Gov. Benigno R. Fitial slashed the Saipan Mayor's Office's budget to \$746,000 for fiscal year 2011, citing reduced government revenue collection of \$132 million.

The \$746,000 budget for the municipality is a significant drop from the \$1.4 million it received in fiscal year 2010 and is

expected to force Flores to cut his personnel by half.

In light of this development, Flores is exploring other revenue sources for the island and has asked the governor's support in operating a cockfight arena and bingo houses to somehow bridge the shortfall.

"I want to centralize that [cockfight arena]...and the governor expressed his support to my idea," Flores told *Saipan Tribune* after his two-hour budget conference in Capitol Hill Thursday.

The mayor, with the governor's support, will specifically ask the Department of Public Lands to designate a public property for the planned cock-

fight arena and bingo houses.

"I asked the governor to approve the designation of some government property [from DPL] so we can move ahead with our plan. By doing this, we can get the needed money for our operation," he said.

Flores admitted that although there is a cockfight arena located within the island, he said this is being operated by private individuals and therefore the municipality is not earning anything from it.

"All the proceeds from these rentals will go directly to the mayor's office [once built]," he said, adding that "in order for me to generate more revenues,

I would like to see those [happen]," he said.

## Licenses for bikers

Flores said he even thought of issuing licenses to bikers to generate additional funding for the municipality.

"I am also thinking of licensing the bikes now...[with this situation with the budget]," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Flores, a Republican, won in the general election last November and this is his first year in office.

During the budget discussion, Flores expressed his disagreement on the governor's proposed workforce reduction to his office. The municipality of Saipan has over 60 employees—a number Flores said has been reduced since he succeeded Juan B. Tudela.

From the 62 current FTEs, the

governor reduced the number to 32 composed of 10 administrative staff and 22 community workers.

The governor pointed out that the municipality has been employing several heavy equipment operators when in fact the

office lacks the said equipment.

It was disclosed during the budget conference that there are many positions in the mayor's office that do not actually perform the job category such as operators functioning as community workers.



## BELATED HAPPY BIRTHDAY

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Belated happy 13th birthday to Jerome Ortiguerra, left, who celebrated his birthday on April 1. Greetings from Mom, Dad, Kuya Jemo, and Janvir.

## Another store sued for allegedly selling expired items

The CNMI government has sued another store on Saipan for allegedly selling expired items without displaying notices that the merchandises have expired, among other alleged violations of the Consumer Protection Act.

The government, through assistant attorney general Michael L. Ernest, sued the owner of the Chalan Piao-based store for violations of the Consumer Protection Act.

The government asked the Superior Court to order the store's owner to pay civil penalties not to exceed \$2,500 for each 15 violations of the Act.

The government asked the court to enjoin the store and its owners and agents from violating the Act.

Ernest stated in the complaint that, on Feb. 23, 2010 the store offered for sale to consumers at least 11 cans of Pepsi identified as of Troop Store origin.

Ernest said that, on the same day the establishment offered for sale to consumers three packages of Cream O Chocolate Chip Cookies, which had expiration dates of Feb. 16, 2010.

He said there was no indication that the prices were reduced to or below half of their original retail price as they were listed as regular price.

"They were not marked as expired. They were stocked on shelves or displayed with merchandise that had not yet reached its expiration date in manner which did not clearly segregate the expired merchandise from other merchandise," Ernest said.

The lawyer said the Common-

wealth Code declares unlawful "stocking expired merchandise on shelves or on display with merchandise that has not yet reached its expiration date in manner which does not clearly segregate the expired merchandise from other merchandise.

He said the Commonwealth Code declares unlawful "selling expired merchandise without displaying a notice that the merchandise has expired."

The Code, Ernest said, also declares unlawful "selling ex-

pired merchandise at more than half of the original retail price."

The Code, he added, declares unlawful "engaging in any other conduct which similarly creates a likelihood of confusion or of misunderstanding."

He said the Code declares unlawful "engaging in any act or practice which is unfair or deceptive to the consumer."

Ernest has earlier filed the same lawsuits against seven different stores on Saipan. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)

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# Easter Egg Hunt

**F**iesta Resort & Spa Saipan yesterday celebrated the end of the Lenten season with Easter Sunday festivities.

Aside from the always popular Easter Sunday Brunch, the Garapan landmark also hosted an Easter egg hunt.

Event organizer Oscar Yema said they prepared 300 Easter eggs for some 75 children to find on the hotel grounds.

Trisha Rivera in a "chicken" attire holds a gift certificate she won by having the best costume during yesterday's Easter Sunday festivities at the Fiesta Resort & Spa in Garapan.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

## Tax Assistance Services

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10-year-old Kathy Deng, left, and Catherine Li, right, show some of the Easter eggs they were able to find during yesterday's Easter Sunday festivities at the Fiesta Resort & Spa in Garapan. Deng found the most number of eggs with 28.



Two of the estimated 75 children prepare to perform a dance number at yesterday's Easter Sunday festivities at the Fiesta Resort & Spa in Garapan.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Derick and Hazel Dela Santa pose with their 2-year-old daughter, Heleyna Frielle, who found the coveted golden egg during yesterday's Easter egg hunting on the grounds of Fiesta Resort & Spa in Garapan.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO



## Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



### INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-10-018

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting seal bids from qualified individuals or firms for the urgent supply of (2) Two CATERPILLAR XQ2000 - 2000 KW Standby / 1825kW Prime generating sets for CUC Rota Power Plant, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The generator sets will be used to power the island of Rota, while CUC take down existing generators for major engine overhaul and rehabilitation. The existing generator sets on Rota are seriously overdue for overhauls and the power situation on Rota is very critical.

Due to this critical situation in Rota and the need for fast delivery and installation of two new generator sets the 1825kW Prime XQ2000 CATERPILLAR was selected. If availability of Brand New Modules exceeds ninety (90) days, only Used Modules with low hours will be considered.

A site visit and pre-bid meeting is not planned, but bidders who wish to visit Rota power plant will be permitted with prior approval. All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on part of the proposers due to a lack of information or understanding of the plant site conditions in the course of the Contractor's preparation of a bid or performance of work under the contract.

The Scope-of-Work and Bid package will be e-mailed upon request, to all interested bidders, by the CUC, Procurement & Supply Office, during working hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.), Monday thru Friday, except government observed holidays, until March 29, 2010.

One (1) original and five (5) copies must be submitted in a seal envelope marked "IFB 10-018 Two XQ2000 CATERPILLAR Generating Modules" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, Room No. 4, 3rd Floor Joeten Dandan, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan MP 96950, no later than Tuesday, April 06, 2010 at 10:00 AM, local time, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

Local Bidders (CNMI based business) will be required to submit a copy of a CNMI Business License upon notice of award of contract. Off-island Bidders (Non-CNMI based business) are excluded from the requirement of submitting a copy of a CNMI Business license upon notice of award of contract.

With respect to bidders' employment of labor as an element of a bid, the Contractor and all subcontractors will be obligated to pay wage rates not less than the current CNMI minimum wage, prevailing through the period of contract, as indicated in the web page —<http://www.dol.gov/esa/minwage/cnmi/cnmi.htm>. The contractor will also be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Selection procedure shall be in full compliance with CUC Procurement Regulations. CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and wave any imperfection in the bid proposal in the interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

All Inquires must be submitted in writing no later than 10:00 AM local time on Thursday April 02, 2010 to Mr. Manuel B. Sablan, Jr., Purchasing Officer via email at [msablan@cucgov.net](mailto:msablan@cucgov.net) and Mr. Wallon Young, Deputy Director Power System Rehabilitation via email at [wallon59@yahoo.com](mailto:wallon59@yahoo.com).

/s/ ABE UTU MALAE  
Acting Executive Director



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<b>B</b>	Spicy Chicken Wings	Kadun Pika	Shrimp with Coconut Milk	Eskabechi	Chicken Adobo
<b>C</b>	Stir Fry Vegetables w/ Pork	Banana Heart w/ Coconut Milk	Chop Suey	Fried Chicken	B.B.Q. Squid
<b>D</b>	Seafood Pancit	Hamburger Spaghetti	Yaki-Udon	Harusame Salad	Seafood Spaghetti
<b>E</b>	Shao Mai	Fry Flute	Shanghai Lumpia	Dumpling	Tuna Lumpia
<b>Soup</b>	Potato Chowder	Wonton Soup	Chicken Noodle Soup	Sotanghon Soup	Sofa de Abo

Meal includes white rice, side dish and today's soup or coffee

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April 5-9, 2010



**COMMUNITY BRIEFS****Senate committee seeks public comments**

The Senate Standing Committee on Health and Welfare is encouraging all members of the general public to submit written recommendations, concerns, questions and/or comment on:

■ S. B. 17-10, SS1: To establish a population-based cancer regis-

try in the Commonwealth Of The Northern Mariana Island; and

■ S.B. 17-11: To enact a new chapter 8 of the Division 2 of Title 3 of the Commonwealth Code; and for other purposes (Medical Consent Act of 2010).

Copy of the legislation may be obtained at the CNMI Legislature in Capitol Hill, Saipan, at the Offices of Senator Ralph DLG. Torres, or the Senate

Clerk, or may be downloaded at [cnmileg.gov.mp](http://cnmileg.gov.mp).

To submit written recommendations, concerns, questions and/or comment, drop off at the Office of Sen. Ralph DLG. Torres at the Legislative Building, may be e-mailed to [senatorrtorres@gmail.com](mailto:senatorrtorres@gmail.com) or may be mailed to P.O. Box 500129, Saipan, MP 96950.

Deadline for submission of comments is April 9, 2010.

For additional information, call (670) 664-8874. (PR)

**NMC Charter Day set; vendors invited**

The Northern Marianas College Charter Day Committee has set the date of the celebration for May 7, 2010. NMC's Charter Day is an annual celebration of the College's service to the community as an institution of

higher learning-it will be 29 years this April since NMC was first chartered.

The Committee is also inviting different agencies, businesses, clubs, and other civic organizations to participate in the upcoming Charter Day celebration. Organizations may purchase booth space for the following categories: food/drink, specialty drinks (e.g. coffee coolers or pearl shakes),

games booths, retail (arts and crafts, toys, etc), and information.

The deadline to submit applications for booth spaces is on April 26, 2010. Booth space is limited, so applications should be submitted as soon as possible.

For application forms, requirements, or for more information, contact Alaysha Muna at 234-5498 Ext. 1300 or email [alaysham@nmcnet.edu](mailto:alaysham@nmcnet.edu). (NMC)

April 6, 2010  
Northern Marianas College  
D-1 Room  
5:00pm-7:00pm

April 7, 2010  
Multi-Purpose Center  
5:00pm-7:00pm

For more information, please e-mail [kilili@mail.house.gov](mailto:kilili@mail.house.gov) or call 323-2647/8.



**Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan is here to listen.** Come share your thoughts on issues that matter to you and the community. It's about working together for a better and stronger Commonwealth.

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Face to Face with U.S. Congressman Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan

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Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands





# Scholarships for future PSS educators offered

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**  
Moneth\_deposa@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

To help school districts in the U.S. mainland and territories build their own local workforce, the United States Department of Education is offering a new scholarship program that would provide full financial assistance to future teachers.

In the CNMI, PSS federal programs officer Tim Thornburgh said that this is probably the first year that PSS will take advantage of the program which it announced to all graduating seniors this school year.

The TEACH Grant Program of DOE provides scholarship

assistance in the amount of \$4,000 per year for four years for students who wish to get a degree in education and become teachers in the public schools.

Thornburgh said qualified applicants from the CNMI will enroll in college or university approved by USDOE.

Compared to other scholarship programs, the PSS program officer said that TEACH Grant has no ceiling on the number of qualified applicants.

In fact, if a student is already a recipient of PELL grant, he/she would still receive the full amount on top of the PELL assistance.

Thornburgh emphasized that

if a student receives \$5,600 from PELL Grant, another \$4,000 from TEACH will be added on top of the amount.

"We are encouraging our graduating seniors to take advantage of this program...but we're reminding them that this is a scholarship that has some teeth because if they change their mind, the financial assistance will be converted to a loan at 6.5 percent per year interest," Thornburgh said.

A condition set under the TEACH Grant is for the scholars to comeback and teach for PSS after obtaining their educational degrees.

Although the scholarship was offered by USDOE in 2008, Thornburgh said this is the first year that the CNMI is introducing the program.

The TEACH Grant program also has a scholarship for teachers who want to get a master's degree which is \$4,000 per year

for two years.

"This is very attractive program and a great opportunity not only for our students who want to become teachers but for our current teachers who want to go and get master's degree," Thornburgh said.

PSS records show that from the over 500 teachers of PSS, there were only 31 percent who have master's degrees: 28 percent are highly qualified while 3 percent are non-highly qualified. Teachers with master's degrees total 178 to date.

For many years, PSS has been experiencing a shortage of classroom teachers. To date only over 500 classroom teachers are handling nearly 11,000 students for all three islands.

Despite the adoption of highly qualified teachers compensation plan, PSS has yet to get the needed number of teachers and continues to scout for applicants from off-island.

## April 5-11 is Cell Phone Recycling Week

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is encouraging citizens to recycle their cell phones during the 2nd Annual National Cell Phone Recycling Week, April 5-11, 2010.

This joint effort with the EPA's Plug-In To eCycling program and leading cell phone manufacturers, retailers, and wireless service providers will increase awareness about the importance of cell phone recycling to save energy and conserve natural resources.

"Every recycled cell phone makes a difference," said Maria Vickers, acting director of EPA's Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery. "The energy saved by recycling even one cell phone is enough to power a laptop for 44 hours."

EPA and its Plug-In partners,

including AT&T, Best Buy, LG Electronics, RecycleBank, Samsung Mobile, Sprint, T-Mobile, and Verizon Wireless, are sponsoring promotional activities across the country to highlight the many easy opportunities to turn in phones for reuse and recycling and provide a call to action. If Americans recycled the approximately 130 million cell phones that are disposed of annually, enough energy would be saved to power more than 24,000 homes in a year. Currently, only about 10 percent of cell phones are recycled.

Reusing or recycling cell phones helps the environment by saving energy and conserving resources. Cell phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs) are made of precious metals, copper, and plastics. Recycling or reusing these devices conserves materials, prevents air and water pollution, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions that occur during manufacturing and processing. For every 1 million cell phones recycled, we can recover 75 pounds of gold, 772 pounds of silver, 33 pounds of palladium, and 35,274 pounds of copper.

Donating working cell phones or PDAs can also have social benefits for communities. Many existing recycling programs donate cell phones that are in good working order to charities or provide them to the public for discounted sale.

Plug-In To eCycling works with companies to offer consumers more opportunities to donate or recycle their used electronics. Since the program began in 2003, Plug-In To eCycling partners have recycled more than 360 million pounds of electronics, including televisions, computers and cell phones.

More information on cell phone collection centers near you: <http://www.epa.gov/cell-phones>. (PR)



### PLAQUE OF RECOGNITION

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marites Aquino Castillo, right, shows off her 2010 National Parent Leadership plaque with teacher Bea of the Joshua Generation International Academy.

#### IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION, CIVIL ACTION NO. 08-0471  
Plaintiff,

-v-

DOLORES PUA POMEI and SAMISONI POMEI, Defendants, NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on March 7, 2010, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth herein below, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendants in and to the following property: Lot No. 002 G 227, situated in Kagman II, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 929 square meters, more or less, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 002 G 06 dated May 31, 1989, Commonwealth Recorder's File No. 90-1903, dated May 14, 1990, the description therein being incorporated herein by reference.

**Date, Time, and Place of Sale.** The sale will be held on Friday, April 30, 2010, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at the Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

**Terms and Conditions of Sale.** The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 23rd day of March 2010:

/s/ MICHAEL A. WHITE, Auctioneer

Robert Tenorio Torres  
Attorney at Law  
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)  
P.O. Box 503758, Saipan, MP 96950  
Tel. (670) 234-7859  
Fax. (670) 234-5749

Attorney for Bank of Guam

#### IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

BANK OF GUAM, CIVIL ACTION NO. 09-0183C  
Plaintiff,

vs.

JACQUELINE A. ATALIG, AMENDED SUMMONS  
Defendant.

TO: THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANT JACQUELINE A. ATALIG

**YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED TO APPEAR** by the 21st day after the fourth date of publication of this AMENDED SUMMONS and defend the above entitled action in the CNMI SUPERIOR COURT, at the Office of Clerk of Court, CNMI SUPERIOR COURT, 1st Floor, Guma' Hustisia, Iimwal Aweewe, House of Justice, Susupe Village, P.O. Box 500307, Saipan MP 96950-0307; and answer the complaint of the plaintiff Bank of Guam, and serve a copy of your answer upon Robert Tenorio Torres, attorney for Plaintiff Bank of Guam, at Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya), P.O. Box 503758, Saipan, MP 96950; and in case of failure to do so, judgement will be rendered against you according to the demand of the COMPLAINT, which has been filed with the Clerk of Court.

So ORDERED this 4th day of March, 2010.

/s/ Clerk of Court

#### IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION, CIVIL ACTION NO. 09-0185  
Plaintiff,

-v-

GENEVIEVE LUANNE S. FITIAL and FRANCISCA S. FITIAL, Defendants, NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on February 25, 2010, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendants in and to the following property: Lot No. 019 J 80, situated in Dandan, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 925 square meters, more or less, as shown on DLS Check No. 019115, dated November 12, 2003, Commonwealth Recorder's File No. 03-2501, the description therein being incorporated herein by reference.

**Date, Time, and Place of Sale.** The sale will be held on Friday, April 9, 2010, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at the Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

**Terms and Conditions of Sale.** The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 3rd day of March, 2010:

/s/ MICHAEL A. WHITE, Auctioneer

## Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

APRIL 5, 1999

### Retirement Fund supports scrapping bonus

Amid slow action by the Legislature on the removal of the 30 percent retirement bonus granted to civil service employees, the NMI Retirement Fund has underlined the need to implement the drastic measure in light of the weak financial condition of the government. Acting Administrator Fred Camacho said the agency would not help the government meet the cash benefits, which has been an initiative from both the executive and legislative branches, despite talks from some lawmakers about asking their assistance. "We support the idea of abolishing the 30 percent bonus, but that is something that they have to deal with because of the resistance of the statute," he told in an interview.

### Legislature works on incentive package

To set an ambitious plan in motion, a proposed legislation will provide tax relief and other incentive package for foreign investors on a proposed free trade zone in the Northern Marianas, including up to 100 percent rebate in corporate and personal income. House Speaker Diego T. Benavente filed the administration-sponsored bill seen as an important component to an earlier measure establishing special economic sites on the island as part of the campaign to revive the local economy. Both bills are now under review by the House committees on Commerce and Tourism as well as Ways and Means who have been tasked to look into the proposal prior to any action by the Legislature.

APRIL 5, 2000

### Begin selection of power project builder

Saying he was "pleased" with the signing of the bill reinstating the mothballed 80-megawatt power plant on Saipan, Senate Floor Leader Pete P. Reyes yesterday prodded the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation to begin work on selection of a contractor to build the project. He said it's about time that CUC officials buckle down to work and address the need of the residents for efficient power supply. CUC Board Chair Jesus T. Guerrero, in a statement, thanked Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio for signing the new law as he stressed that the policy-making body will still have the flexibility in handling procurement of the much delayed project. "It is not a matter of CUC being told what to do and we retain all that autonomy that we were originally granted. The winners here... are the power users of Saipan who will be spared unnecessary delay in getting this crucial public project built," he said.

### NMHC soliciting support from banks on home lending program

Discussion is already underway between the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation and two private banking companies for a joint effort in intensifying the government's home lending program, according to Executive Director Marylou S. Ada. Ms. Ada disclosed that housing officials have been trying to encourage Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation and the First Hawaiian Bank to provide guaranteed mortgage financing to beef up NMHC efforts in promoting the advantages of home ownership. NMHC has an existing agreement with the Bank Pacific and the Bank of Hawaii. Earlier this year, the housing corporation signed a residential financing agreement with the Bank of Guam.

APRIL 5, 2001

### CNMI eyes upgrade of communication system

Key government agencies led by the Emergency Management Office are revving up plans to upgrade the Commonwealth's outdated communication response system in efforts to maintain preparedness for emergency disasters, in the national or local scale. EMO Director Gregorio A. Deleon Guerrero said yesterday department heads are currently exploring for sources of funding to finance the systems upgrade that is envisioned to bob the length of response time, especially in crises situations. "There have been issues raised that the communication system we use is old and dilapidating. We are looking at possibly local resources and federal grants to support this project," said the EMO official.

### EPA won't fund shipment of PCB-contaminated soil

The United States Environmental Protection Agency will not extend any financial assistance to the Army Corps of Engineer should shipment of PCB-contaminated soil from Tanapag Village be recommended as an option. US-EPA Superfund Division Deputy Director Michael Feeley said funding for the proposed disposal of the PCB contaminated soil should be sourced out by the Department of Defense, not the environmental agency. He said shipment is the last option being looked at by the agency while other means to resolve the villagers' concerns are being explored by federal regulatory agencies as continued environmental studies are being undertaken.



# ATF to conduct large scale disposal of illegal explosives

The U.S. Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, an agency within the U.S. Department of Justice, announced they will be conducting a large scale disposal operation of hazardous illegal explosives devices on Saipan.

The disposal will be conducted in partnership with the CNMI Department of Public Safety, CNMI Department of Public Works, and the Saipan Fire Department.

A specialized team of certified explosives specialists from ATF's Explosives Technology Branch in Washington, D.C. will lead the disposal operation which began on Wednesday, March 31, and is anticipated to be completed by April 6, 2010.

The operation began with an inventory and analysis of approximately 500 cases of illegal hazardous explosives described as



Pictured above is part of the shipment of illegal explosives that will be destroyed on the island of Saipan by ATF.

clandestinely manufactured commercial grade fireworks shipped from Beihai, China to Saipan.

The fireworks were brought to the attention of the ATF through anonymous letters from island citizens, expressing safety concerns, as well as consequential inspections by Guam Customs and Quarantine and the CNMI Department of Public Safety.

Many of the shipped cases of fireworks did not display the required markings mandated by both the Department of Transportation and the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Upon ATF inventory and technical examination, many of the fireworks were also found to contain excess amounts of explosives powder well above the classification indicated on the packaging making the devices significantly more powerful than allowed by law. While ATF does not normally regulate consumer fireworks, which is the responsibility of States and Territories, these particular items became subject to federal statutes and storage re-

quirements as a result of the DOT and CPSC violations.

"These types of explosives devices and fireworks can be extremely dangerous and should never be taken lightly," said J.D. Powell, the Supervisory Explosives Enforcement Officer with ATF's Explosives Technology Branch.

"Over the years more State and Local bomb technicians have been injured or killed disposing of illegal fireworks more so than any other type of disposal operation."

"If we could encourage people to do one thing," said George Mastin, Supervisor of the ATF Guam Office, "it would be to take all fireworks seriously and be extremely careful around them. We're really out here this week with one main purpose, to help protect islanders by safely disposing of a hazardous and unsafe product."

This is the first time a disposal operation of this nature has been conducted on Saipan or within the Commonwealth. **(PR)**

## Joeten is title sponsor for 2010 MMAC

The 2010 Marianas March Against Cancer committee announced that the Joeten Charitable Foundation has agreed to become "title sponsors" for the 2010 MMAC.

Title sponsorship is the highest level of sponsorship for the Marianas March Against Cancer. Joeten Charitable Foundation has continually supported the MMAC and is one of the oldest sponsors of this annual

event which raises funds for cancer patient assistance, cancer awareness programs and other cancer related services.

All funds raised are spent locally. The 2010 MMAC committee expresses their sincere appreciation to the Joeten Charitable Foundation for their untiring support in the fight against cancer.

The 2010 Marianas March Against Cancer will be held on May 14-15 from 6pm to 6am

at the Hopwood Junior High School field in Chalan Piao.

The entire community is invited for a night full of great food, live entertainment, fun games and other fundraising activities that all support the battle against cancer in the CNMI.

Luminaries and raffle tickets are being sold for only \$5 each. For more information, call 483-4207, email janine.nogis@gmail.com or visit www.cca-

marianas.org.

Cancer survivors and patients are encouraged to email norasablan@gmail.com to register for the complementary dinner held in their honor on the night of the event.

The 2010 MMAC is brought to you by title sponsors Joeten Charitable Foundation, Delta Air Lines, Take Care/FHP and Sorensen Media Group (Power 99/97.9 The Kat/ABC7). **(PR)**

## Air Force sets training on FDM

The U.S. Air Force will conduct training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla on April 5-7 and 9, from 6:30am to 8pm.

The public, especially fisherman, commercial pilots and marine tour operators, are advised to stay clear from these

areas during the times and dates indicated.

The general location of the training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla training area will be on a 10 nautical mile radius on all quadrants. **(PR)**

### ZONING OFFICE TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETINGS & WORKSHOPS

The Zoning Office will be holding workshops to promote educational awareness of the 2008 Saipan Zoning Law, as well as to seek comments on how the law is working. These workshops are in line with the Zoning Board's goal of addressing the issues and concerns expressed by the community, private sector and the legislature as it prepares for the law's review and update. The public consultation and information campaign will continue over the next month in order to obtain feedback required to update the 2008 Saipan Zoning Law. Please note the following changes made to the dates, times, and target group for the coming days:

<b>Wednesday, April 7, 2010</b>	<b>9:00 to 10:00am</b> <b>Engineers/ Architects</b>
<b>Wednesday, April 7, 2010</b>	<b>2:00 to 3:00pm</b> <b>Adult Businesses</b>
<b>Wednesday, April 14, 2010</b>	<b>2:00 to 3:00pm</b> <b>Government Agencies</b>

All workshops will be held at the Zoning Office conference room, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, DanDan, Saipan. Anyone with questions about the meetings may contact the Zoning Office by phone at 234-9661 or by e-mail at [staff@zoning.gov.mp](mailto:staff@zoning.gov.mp).

/s/ Herminia M. Fusco, Chairperson

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS ZONING BOARD TO HOST VILLAGE MEETINGS

The Zoning Board and Office will hold a round of village meetings to seek comments about how the current zoning law is working, and will update and revise the current zoning law with the goal of addressing the issues and concerns expressed by the community, private sector and the legislature. The public consultation and information campaign over the next two months will continue in order to obtain feedback required to update the 2008 Saipan Zoning Law. Meeting dates and locations which have been confirmed are:

<b>Tuesday, April 6, 2010 6:00 PM</b>	<b>Kagman and Capitol Hill Villages</b> <b>@ Kagman Community Center</b>
<b>Thursday, April 8, 2010 6:00 PM</b>	<b>San Vicente Village</b> <b>@ San Vicente Elementary School Cafeteria</b>
<b>Thursday, April 15, 2010 6:00 PM</b>	<b>Dandan Village</b> <b>@ Dandan Elementary School Cafeteria</b>
<b>Tuesday, April 20, 2010 6:00 PM</b>	<b>San Roque Village</b> <b>@ GTC Elementary School Cafeteria</b>

The Board encourages anyone with suggestions that might improve the language of the law, or changes to the zone boundaries to attend. Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the meeting. Written suggestions may also be submitted in writing to the Zoning Office no later than 4:30 pm, April 30, 2010 or they may be submitted via e-mail to [staff@zoning.gov.mp](mailto:staff@zoning.gov.mp), via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or delivered to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, DanDan, Saipan.

Anyone with questions about the meetings may contact the Zoning Office by phone at 234-9661 or by e-mail at [staff@zoning.gov.mp](mailto:staff@zoning.gov.mp).

/s/ Herminia M. Fusco, Chairperson



# Opinion

Hafa Adai!

## Saipan Tribune

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Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI  
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP 96950Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR  
Mark Rabago ASSISTANT EDITOR

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

## EDITORIAL

### Democracy, Iraq-style

First came a narrow and surprising election victory by the former Iraqi prime minister, Ayad Allawi. Then a demand by the stone-faced current officeholder, Nouri al-Maliki, for a recount, as his supporters hurled charges of election fraud, vote buying and other rough-and-tumble political shenanigans. "No way we will accept the results!" he vowed.

Some political analysts fear that turbulence ahead could delay the scheduled withdrawal of U.S. combat troops this summer. They worry about instability and violence.

But here's what we see: Iraqis are embracing democracy with ferocity and purple-fingered majesty. The Sunnis who boycotted parliamentary elections in 2005 stampeded to the polls this time, voting overwhelmingly for the secular Allawi.

Maybe Iraqi pols aren't promising to pave the alley or deliver a new garbage can — mainstays in the Chicago ward boss's vote-garnering arsenal — but democracy in Iraq is starting to look like democracy, well, everywhere else. Which is to say, it's chaotic and unpredictable. Maybe some people are voting early and often, in the Chicago tradition of electoral hijinks. There's no word yet on whether there was a significant graveyard turnout.

But remember: Eight years ago, Iraqis went to the polls in an immaculate election. Immaculate and completely fraudulent. The vote: 11,445,638 to 0 for dictator Saddam Hussein. Even the most brazen Chicago ward boss wouldn't try to steal every vote.

When the U.S.-led coalition toppled Saddam Hussein in 2003, the hope in Washington was that democracy would take hold in Iraq and provide a powerful model for the rest of the Middle East. That is happening now:

The brave Iranians protesting their hijacked 2009 presidential election can see it happening. And so can Egyptians rising in opposition to another term for increasingly frail President Hosni Mubarak. Those who aspire to democracy in countries like Saudi Arabia and Syria are watching, too.

No one knew how or whether democracy would thrive in Iraq after Saddam. It was a calculated risk. A country riven by religion could split further apart. You could flip on a cable news channel and find all manner of alleged experts predicting that democracy never would thrive in Iraq: This was a cobbled-together country whose long-oppressed citizens didn't have a sophisticated political heritage on which to rely.

Those predictions were just wrong.

Yes, deep divisions still cleave Iraqis. But they're voting for leaders who promise government focused on Iraq, not on this or that religious sect. They're also diminishing the clout of Iranian-backed parties allied with the militant cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. That's good.

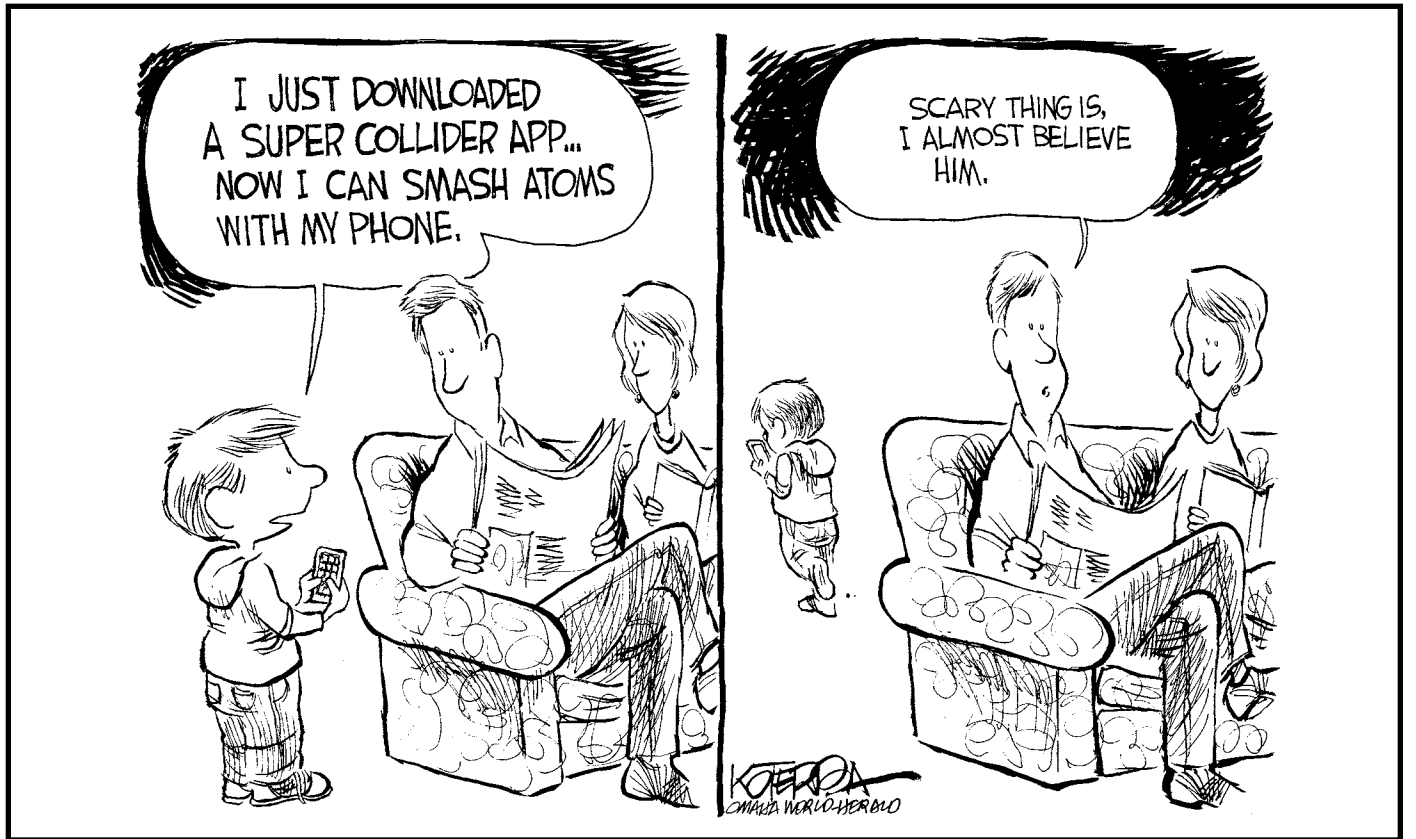
In 2004, Allawi became the U.S.-backed prime minister. The next year, he was derided as an American puppet and trounced at the polls. But now he's back. Why? Because he appealed to a broad swath of Iraqis who don't want a leader skilled only at pandering to narrow religious concerns. They want an Iraqi leader.

Iraq probably faces months of political turmoil in the aftermath of the election. Allawi and al-Maliki are formidable rivals and they'll marshal their forces to build the parliamentary majority that would make one of them prime minister.

Both have shown they can do the job with grit and tenacity. The more important news for Americans who have wondered where the toppling of Hussein would lead:

Like other democracies around the world, Iraq's is in good hands: the voters'.

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## How the public and private sectors salaries become unequal?

By ANTHONY PELLEGRINO  
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Why are salaries in the public sector so high and why are salaries in the private sector so low? How did this come about? Why were resident workers in the private sector shortchanged? Believe it or not—salaries for both sectors were once the same, but...

Yes, once upon a time salaries for both workers in the public sector and private sector were the same. But something happened along the way. Today there is a major difference. The public sector employee earns much more than the private sector employee. Yet it is not because the public sector employee is so much more skilled. In fact, sometimes he is less skillful. What happened? And what are the results of this action?

Somewhere along the line, we "forgot" to train our local residents, preferring to bring in nonresident workers at lower wages thereby forcing our resident workers to become food stamp recipients. Why? Have you ever asked that question? As a result we are in the state we are now—non-resident workers leaving and little effort being made to train our local labor force. Why?

One of the first laws regarding workers conditions was Public Law No. 3-33 passed by the 3rd Legislature. Let me quote just a few words:

**"Resident workers shall be given preference in employment in the CNMI. Nonresident workers shall be employed only as necessary to supplement the available labor force."**

Included in that law was Section 11, which mandated an apprenticeship training program. But as you know this was never carried out. Oh, by the way that law was passed in 1982!

After many years of messing around with labor laws which resulted in making them more confusing and less appealing to resident workers, on June 23, 1993, Public Law No. 8-21 was signed into law. Its purpose was "to amend the Minimum Wage and Hour Act (2 CMC, Division) Chapter 2) to increase the minimum wage; attract indigenous people towards the private sector employment; eliminate the occupational exemption for construction workers; set a special minimum wage for exempt occupations; create a wage and salary review board; and for other purposes."

Here is a quote from the Governor's letter attached to the bill when he signed it into law on June 1993:

**"Passage of H.B. No. 8-146 will undoubtedly benefit our people in the Commonwealth. We will sincerely strive to carry out the good intent of this bill so that: indigenous people and permanent residents will be attracted to private sector employment; the burden of an increased cost of living will be eased; and better skilled workers will become available. The legislation also shows that we are serious in making reforms where reforms are needed, and when such reforms are well-thought out and beneficial to all the people of the commonwealth."**

By ANTHONY PELLEGRINO  
Special to the Saipan Tribune

*Pellegrino is a longtime businessman in the CNMI and is the former president of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce.*



Then we find this interesting quote in the same bill:

**"Section 2. Findings. The Legislature finds that raising the minimum wage is necessary to: (a) meet an increase in the cost of living; (b) attract indigenous people and permanent residents to private sector employment by relieving the disparity between the prevailing wages in the public sector and those in the private sector...."**

Very notable remarks in both quotes, don't you agree? But what happened to the promises?

This law also stated that minimum wages would yearly be increased until 1999 when they would become \$4.25 per hour! This law was good and seemed to show sincere appreciation and understanding of the employment situation in 1993. But look what happened a mere six months later.

On December 20, 1993, only six months later, the same Governor signed Public Law No. 8-34, entitled, "To amend Public Law No. 8-21; and other purposes." It postponed all wage increases. Then PL No. 10-66 provided funds only to government workers across the board a 5-percent raise; it also provided funds to NMC to train locals for employment. PL No. 11-22 created a second wage review committee, both of which never materialized. What happened to that money and how many locals were trained? By 1999, the minimum wage was to have become \$4.25! Only now in 2010, we are finally at \$4.55 per hour! Why?

The remarks above are only a small part of what has been happening to our laws and regulations concerning wages. There are over 40 laws that tinkered with the employment of resident and nonresident workers since 1983 and 2009. I estimate that at least 75 percent were passed on the first and final reading. This means that there was no prior notice given to their colleagues in the various legislative bodies so that they could review and ask questions. These laws were simply introduced on the floor and passed by a voice vote immediately. I wonder what the rush was all about, don't you? Any wonder why so many of our laws passed like that are asinine?

Don't you ever wonder why our young people who graduate from college with the knowledge we need never came back to work here? We refuse to pay them what they are worth.

See HOW on Next Page



**EDITORIAL POLICY**

The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

# Monday morning me

It looks like the title of an old James Bond movie, this phrase bantered about this past 40 days, particularly the last three days: *To live is to die, to die is to live!*

Nothing is so obviously true than the fact that all creatures born are bound to die, but it is not as truly obvious at the surface of our daily living that dying is needed to birth new life. Never mind that in the food chain of our experience, and our sense on the natural life cycle, something/someone always dies so that another may live. Dying is an integral part of life. But we generally shy away from the subject of death, and though the modern mind tends to anticipate future events, we seldom venture into the statistical probability of our timely demise, all things being equal. Thus, when a dysfunction finally occurs, it comes as a threat to be anxious about, rather than as a friendly reminder to start winding down.

*Que sera sera* (what will be, will be) remains our heart's top tune, and with the increased Pinoy presence in the Commonwealth, the phrase *bahala na* (leave it to fate), a corruption of the Malay *Bathala na*, which is the equivalent of the Arabic *Anshallah*, (God willing!), is oft-uttered when confronting next steps.

The raking over the coals of our internal understandings in this column's previous reflections has become the *sine qua non* (that without which) of our social commentaries, and because we tend to belabor many of our points, we've received collegial advice to stick to the staccato one-liner of sound bites, given everyone's short attention span. We continue to keep our narratives of the kind that tax the imagination, daunt our understanding, and overly require a not

## HOW

From Page 10

It appears that our leaders were deluded into thinking that cheap non-resident workers would make us prosperous without having to work. Let the cheap non-resident workers do it for us. So they catered to foreign investors at our expense. It is not my intention to criticize but to point out that the majority of us have been suffering for the benefit of theses few. This must stop if this country and we are to prosper.

Does the following quote sound familiar? **"Senate tightens rules for entry of nonresident workers....The legislation is part of the reform measures which local officials want to put into place in a bid to block attempts in the U.S. Congress to strip local authority over labor and immigration."**

This was being discussed in August 1999—11 years ago! Why didn't we correct the problem then? Ever wonder why Federalization is finally here? Believe or not the U.S. government has been and is watching our every move.

We hear so often that with the influx of more and more investors our economy will boom. Let's look at that statement. All our hotels, all our major businesses, all our tourist agents, almost all of our small businesses are owned and operated by foreign investors. The sole casino in Tinian is a foreign investment and another soon to be in Rota. All the garment industry owners were foreign investors.

Please explain to ourselves how you and I benefited from all these investments? What benefits today do we locals receive in the way of jobs and other amenities? How many of us are hired? Of course, more people are hired by the government as it continues to become bloated. Is this the type of benefit we want and need?

The whole problem boils down to the amount of wages we are willing to pay, to whom we pay these wages and why we should pay these wages to our own people. As a result of not settling this chronic problem, thousands of families are on welfare and others are leaving our beautiful islands because we cannot get our act together.

I believe that once salaries become equal in both sectors and our people become skilled, most of our problems concerning labor will vanish. I will repeat this statement over and over until we realize that it is the basic truth for any nation that wants to create a prosperous and happy life for its people:

**OUR NATION'S STRENGTH LIES IN THE WILLINGNESS OF OUR CITIZENS TO WORK. WE MUST CONTROL OUR OWN ECONOMIC DESTINY.**

**WE MUST BECOME TRAINED AND SKILLED WORKERS. WHEN THIS HAPPENS WE WILL BE THE INVESTORS, THE ENTREPRENEURS, AND THE BUILDERS OF OUR NATION. THEN WE CAN WALK WITH OUR HEADS HELD HIGH—WITH RESPECT AND DIGNITY FOR OURSELVES!**

Remember our children are watching us. May God grant us the power and determination to do this. Let us begin now before time runs out and before we squander away all the acres of diamonds we have. Let's become skilled and professional citizens. I believe in us and in our ability to succeed. Don't you? Let's do it!

too infrequent trip to the dictionary. We've been more lyrical than descriptive, more poetic than prosaic, in mirroring what we sense is at the core of our ordinary lives.

KISS is a good formula for the surface thought and the recurring, but when plumbing the depth of human profundity, and scaling the heights of creaturely greatness, not to mention the wide scope and comprehensive breadth of human relatedness, we beg indulgence on our chosen prolixity! Conciseness is a virtue we hold elsewhere.

There has been abroad awhile a misreading of the constitutional intent and meaning of the separation of Church and State that fall on the exclusionary side, barring any serious consideration of anything religious in the public sector. Consequently, we are now experiencing a conserving backlash by those who particularly find solace in keeping old metaphors and erstwhile meaningful symbols intact, or, at least, to have those well-worn powerful images remain at play.

For instance, the demand to rewrite history textbooks (as in Texas)—of course, Japan-Korea-China have been verbally warring over the practice in the political field for many years, and the move to retain vestiges of religious icons in the public domain, are asking us again to reappropriate the wisdom of the ages contained in the calcified learnings from the past. While the dreaded specter of doctrinaire literalism dogs every step of recovery of any kernel of truth from extant writings (e.g. the *Biblos* and the Koran), we deign not hear echoes of truth in metaphorical translations and instead, see heretical handwritings on those who refuse to pour new wine into old wineskins.

Consider the imageries of the Greek writer Nikos Kazantzakis in his *Spiritual Exercises, The Saviors of God*:

*We come from a dark abyss,  
we end in a dark abyss,  
and we call the luminous interval life.  
As soon as we are born  
the return begins,*

# Gi didog na tiempun eskases

Kada ha palopu' hit i tiempun eskases, man-afaisen hit amanu 'nai siña ta sodae' fondu para apas empleao, estudianteta ni man-gaige sanhiyuñg, mariferin man-malañgu, kuentata gi programan man-ritirau, yan otru siha obligasion.

Todu klasen atten politika guaha gi pisu lau unu sumen klaru: Taya salape para apas este siha na obligasion sin boluntariamente maribaha i oran chochu' yan otru siha gastu.

Guaha un' estudianta ilelegña na i empleau gobietnu hasan man-inaminasa 'nai poduñg i fuetsan rinikohen kontribusion tax. Lau yangin empleau bisnis, un'ratu ha' ma-disidi maribahan sueddun niha 'sino numeron empleau sa' bahu i kinalamten.

Hafa na ti listu todus atmosferan bandan gobietnu--administrasion yan Lehislatura—umakude lokue empleau bisnis lau ginen i kontribusion niha na guaha apas sueddun tres ramas gobietnu? A'anog man-ñan ti mana presisu este na grupon empleau lau siha prumebeniniye sueddun empleau tres ramas gobietnu.

Debi i maribahan gastu u kubre todus de hemunos kau prinitehe nu i konstitusion. I pinadese parehu gi todus kinalamten tautauta guine. Pues na fan humidde hamyu señores jues yan membron lehislatura ya in' fañaunau gi este na sakrifisio.

■■■

Mangaige hit pagu gi ayu na patte 'nai ta sosopla i alaguan Pasifku gi tres granun pugas ni gumagama gi halom kalahe. Todu mata gaige gi otru mata siha para umana' seguru na ni unu sumopla i granun pugas. Gigon un' atrebi kum sopla unu, añogogu na todus u fan man-galate para un' manamuta' nu i pidason pugas.

I morat este na estoria pot diskuidu gi tiempun abundansia. Kulang pagu ta repapara na debi ta fan man-lotge hanom lau mimadog batdeta. De dios mihu!

■■■

Kada kahulu i presiun laña, chumichi'yu sa' kahulu siempre talu i gaston kandet. Kada tumunug, luhanyu sa' libianu talu i publiku maseha dididi. Trabiha i presiun laña ti matagtaghoñg fitme gi sagaña.

Esta hu rikononose puntan iya Agiñgan kau guaha lebug laña gi tasi. Hu tuñgu na guaha gi fondun tasin iya Marianas laña, lau mampos taduñg para ta kusecha. Dispues, taya gi entre hita ma-estudia pot makenarian man-guadog laña gi taduñg tasi.

■■■

I kustumbren tanu gi halom familiata antau ya abundansia sensian komunida deste troñku huyuñg esta'i ramas parentela. Gi megai na kinalamten, man-gaige lokue i bisinu man-listu para u fan man-ayuda deste mahatsan palapala 'sino fina kusina.

Esta pagu memetgut ha' este na kustumbren tanu pot 'nai guaha fina kinalamten 'sino chochu na dañkulu. Todu pot todus, guaha sensian inafamauleg yan kooperasion gi korason tautauta. Hombre

By **JAIME VERGARA**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

*Vergara is a regular contributor to the Saipan Tribune's Opinion Section.*



*at once the setting forth  
and the coming back;  
we die in every moment...  
But as soon as we are born  
we begin the struggle to create,  
to compose, to turn matter into life;  
we are born in every moment.*

Life and death are two sides of the same coin—the passion and the glory of the Christ, in my language. That we approach each with fear and trepidation has been the product of memes transmitted through our cultures. We have forgotten that each side is not a matter of leaving it to external fate to give it form. We have been given the physics to know that at the core of matter is energy; we have been granted freedom to choose to turn flesh of our delight to the glory of sheer spirit. For some of us, after immersion in the metaphors of Lent—from ashes-to-ashes, dust-to-dust to the stark power of the empty tomb—we rise again!

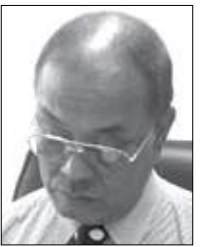
As any astute theologian worth his sacramental salt would proclaim, any reality of risenness/resurrection in any paradigmatic figure is nothing but mental exercise unless it is similarly personal of the adherent, disciple and faithful. But, of course, religion has been relegated to perfunctory rites and rituals, at best, and to mumbo-

See **MONDAY** on Page 13

By **JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

*DelRosario is a regular contributor to the Saipan Tribune's Opinion Section.*



motmut lokue yinease gi otru tautau ni fumagchae didog na chinat-saga. Mauleg ta eksisia satton este na kustumbren tanu para satbasion todus piot pagu gi didog na tiempun eskases.

■■■

Enfin, monhayan i botasion mayot para i sankattan siha na islas. Si Señor Tobias Aldan ha gana si Señora Ramona Rebuénog. Diniñgu si Rebuénog benti botu guine gi uttimu na biradan ileksion ni inetdin kotte.

Lau man-namase' i mayot siha na biahe sa' mampos bahu i rinikohen kontribusion tax. Dispues, sige i man-dikiki siha na bisnis mahuchum pettan niha. Humuyuñg mas talu menos kontribusion tax gi uttimun i sakan para operasion gobietnamentu.

■■■

I chaguan yan troñku siha gi todus lugat man-malahyu ginen fotte na tiempun maípe. Siklu este na tinilaika ya siempre dispues u poduñg i primet agua de Abrit ya u fan mañusu talu. Chalan ni ti man-mapesun inipus potbus. Yangin gaige hau gi fina lanchu ni chagu yan hanum siuda, pues debi un' fan lupug diariamente. I puntu: Siklu este na pinadese lau esta hit man-malulug sumuñgun chinat-sagata. Estague' sensian figu' na tautau isla siha.

■■■

Guaha gi membron lehislatura chumochoneg nuebu na programan homestead para Tinian, Luta, Saipan yan sankattan siha na islas. I problema ti mababan nuebu na lugat residente soluke sumen dañkulu na gaston salape manesessita para hanom, kandet, chalan yan sewer. Ha nesessita este na programa mas ke \$200 milyon pesos para umana posible.

Pot fabot, tutuhon dumeka kau in' fan mañoda fondu para este na nesessidad. Na bali i finu' miyu gi pisu ya in' suhaye mana' bulachun publiku. Ni unu mumirese sinparat na dinage.

■■■






Pot Ositan: Guaha un' tautauta eta pagu gaige i papa' troñkun man-sanita gi hiyuñg pettan i lañget pot benti años na tiempu. Era masensura para u diletra un' naan' guihan ginen Hawaii: Humuhumunukunukupaupua. Anakoña naanña i guihan ke guihan mismu. Pot fabot email 'sino text i prohímu ya puede mana halom gi lañget.



Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: [www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/](http://www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/)

# The Weather

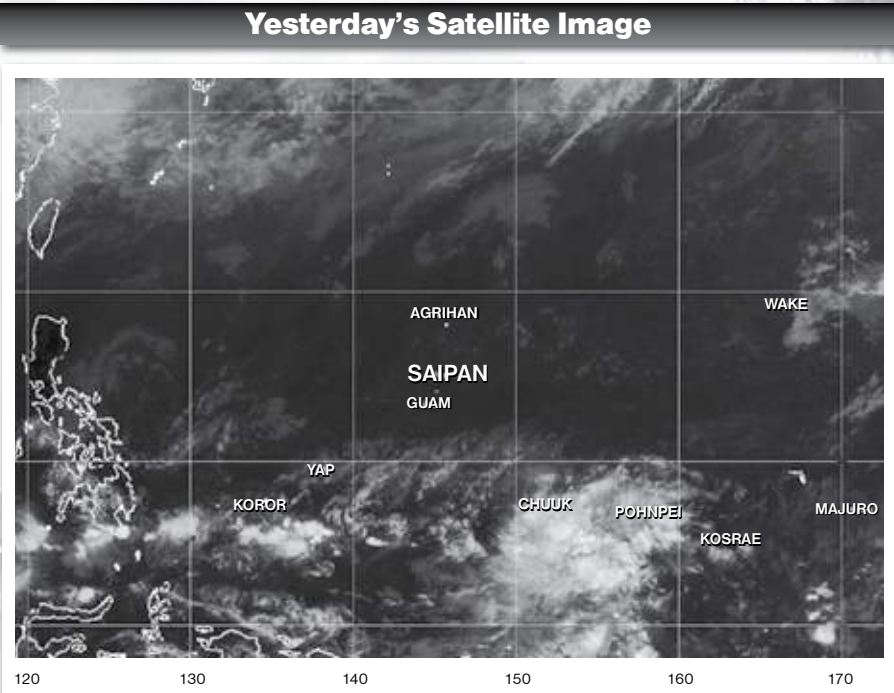
## 5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
				
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°

Micronesia		
Guam and Rota	Sunny	▲86 ▼77
Palau	Thundershowers	▲88 ▼78
Yap	Partly Cloudy	▲88 ▼78
Chuuk	Thundershowers	▲86 ▼80
Pohnpei	Showers	▲85 ▼80
Kosrae	Showers	▲85 ▼80
Majuro	Thundershowers	▲87 ▼79

Around The Globe		
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	▲69 ▼62
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	▲64 ▼42
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	▲78 ▼70
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲82 ▼71
London	Mostly Cloudy	▲54 ▼45
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	▲63 ▼51
Manila	Thundershowers	▲92 ▼82
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	▲73 ▼62
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲81 ▼66
New York	Partly Cloudy	▲72 ▼51
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲65 ▼51
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	▲58 ▼38
Pusan	Partly Cloudy	▲60 ▼50
Rome	Showers	▲60 ▼42
Salem	Showers	▲52 ▼38
San Francisco	Rain	▲51 ▼47
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	▲59 ▼47
Tokyo	Rain	▲59 ▼53
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	▲76 ▼53

Tides			
Saipan Harbor			
1:11 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.6 Feet
6:19 AM	Today	Low Tide:	1.3 Feet
10:51 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.7 Feet
6:46 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.0 Feet



**PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, SUNDAY, APRIL 4, 2010**  
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front extends southwestward from 25N143E to 24N140E then turns westward to beyond 130E at 24N. Cloudiness and patchy rain are found along and up to 300 miles north of the front. A near-equatorial trough extends east-southeastward from 2N130E to end near EQ137E. Low-level convergence on the north side of the trough is causing scattered showers and a few thunderstorms just south of Koror within 100 miles of a line from 6N130E to 5N139E. A trade-wind disturbance is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms over Chuuk and Pohnpei between 2N and 9N from 150E to 160E. A surface trough extends northward from 2N179E to 8N179E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are found near the date line to the east of a line from EQ177E to 7N177E. Convergent low-level winds are combining with upper-level divergence to trigger scattered showers over and east of Wake Island in an area bounded by a line from 23N168E to 21N177E to 17N177E to 17N166E back to 23N168E.

Sunrise/Sunset		
Today	6:10 AM	6:30 PM
Tuesday	6:09 AM	6:30 PM
Wednesday	6:09 AM	6:30 PM
Thursday	6:08 AM	6:30 PM
Friday	6:07 AM	6:30 PM

Moonrise/Moonset		
Today		10:54 AM
Tuesday	12:20 AM	11:48 AM
Wednesday	1:06 AM	12:39 PM
Thursday	1:49 AM	1:29 PM
Friday	2:28 AM	2:17 PM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 30, 2010			
DEPARTURES		ARRIVALS	
<b>ROTA (ROP)-GUAM</b>		<b>GUAM-ROTA (ROP)</b>	
C09597	5:00am 5:30am 1, 5	C09598	6:30pm 7:00pm 4, 7
<b>SAIPAN-GUAM</b>		<b>GUAM-SAIPAN</b>	
C09317	4:25am 5:15am Daily	C09316	2:00am 2:50am 1, 2, 3, 4, 7
C09313	8:30am 9:20am Daily	C09598	2:45am 3:35am Daily
C09601	12:10pm 1:00pm 1, 4, 5, 7	C09596	7:00am 7:50am Daily
C09603	3:05pm 3:55pm Daily	C09600	10:05am 10:55am Daily
C09605	6:35pm 7:25pm Daily	C09602	1:40pm 2:30pm 1, 4, 5, 7
C09599	9:35pm 10:25pm Daily	C09604	5:10pm 6:00pm Daily
		C09606	8:10pm 9:00pm Daily
<b>SAIPAN-NAGOYA (NGO)</b>		<b>NAGOYA (NGO)-SAIPAN</b>	
DL640	8:40am 11:25am 1, 3, 7	DL641	9:10pm 1:40am+1 Daily
<b>SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)</b>		<b>NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN</b>	
DL287	5:55am 8:35am Daily	DL290	10:00am 2:35pm Daily
DL640/646	8:40am 1:55pm 1, 3, 7 via NGO	DL298	10:30am 3:05pm Daily
DL297	3:35pm 6:15pm Daily	DL288	8:40pm 1:15am+1 Daily
DL289	4:35pm 7:15pm Daily	DL287/641	6:35pm 1:40am+1 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via NGO
<b>SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)</b>		<b>BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN</b>	
OZ608	3:20am 6:50am 1, 5	OZ607	9:00pm 2:20am+1 4, 7
<b>SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)</b>		<b>SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN</b>	
OZ604	2:20am 6:10am 1	OZ605	9:00am 2:30pm 2, 4, 6, 7
OZ604	2:50am 6:30am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	OZ120	7:10pm 2:20am+1 Daily via Osaka
OZ119	4:00am 11:25am Daily via Osaka		Arrive OSA 8:50pm, leave OSA 9:50pm
	Arrive OSA 6:40am, leave OSA 9:30am	OZ603	7:40pm 1:10am+1 7
OZ606	3:30pm 7:00pm 2, 4, 6, 7	OZ603	8:10pm 1:40am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
<b>SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)</b>		<b>SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN</b>	
FM844	2:50am 5:40am 2, 6	FM843	7:15pm 1:50am+1 1, 5
<b>SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)</b>		<b>GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN</b>	
CZ3008	3:30am 6:40am 2, 6	CZ3007	7:30pm 2:40am+1 1, 5
<b>SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)</b>		<b>MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN</b>	
OZ604/701	2:20am 11:50am 1 via ICN	OZ706/607	3:35am 2:10am+1 3, 4, 6, 7 via PUS
OZ604/701	2:50am 11:50am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	C0890/9606	10:55am 9:00pm 6 via GUM
OZ608/705	3:20am 1:30am+1 1, 4, 5, 7 via PUS	OZ702/603	1:10pm 1:40am+1 7 via ICN
	6 via GUM	OZ702/603	1:10pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ9317/891	4:25am 9:45am 6 via GUM	PR110/C09596	10:00pm 7:50am+1 1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
C09603/893	3:15pm 9:10pm 3, 5 via GUM	C0892/9596	10:00pm 7:50am+1 3.5 via GUM
C09603/933	3:15pm 8:40pm Daily via GUM	C0934/9596	10:55pm 7:50am+1 Daily via GUM
OZ606/703	3:20pm 10:55pm 2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN	OZ704/605	11:55pm 2:20pm+1 1, 3, 5, 6 via ICN
C09605/933	6:20pm 9:40pm Daily via GUM		
C09599/PR111	9:20pm 7:50am+1 1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM		
<b>SAIPAN-HONG KONG</b>		<b>HONG KONG-SAIPAN</b>	
OZ604/721	2:20am 11:45pm 1 via ICN	OZ724/605	12:30am 2:20pm 2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ604/721	2:50am 11:45pm 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	OZ750/605	1:00am 2:20pm 2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/749	3:30pm 11:00pm 4, 6, 7 via ICN	OZ722/603	1:15pm 1:10am+1 7 via ICN
		OZ722/603	1:15pm 1:40am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
<b>SAIPAN-OSAKA (KIX)</b>		<b>OSAKA (KIX)-SAIPAN</b>	
OZ119	4:00am 6:40am Daily	OZ120	9:55am 2:20am+1 Daily
Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CZ: China Southern; CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)			

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE			
Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
<b>Guam-Rota</b>			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
<b>Rota-Saipan</b>			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
<b>Saipan-Rota</b>			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
<b>Rota-Guam</b>			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
<b>Guam-Rota</b>			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
<b>Rota-Saipan</b>			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
<b>Saipan-Rota</b>			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
<b>Rota-Guam</b>			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
<b>Saipan-Tinian</b>			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily
<b>Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**</b>			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

## GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

- PICTURES**
  - ISLAND SNAPSHOTS Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
  - BIRTHDAY GREETINGS A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
  - BUSINESS Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
  - SAMUT SARI Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
  - TRAVELOGUE Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS

- Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

### REQUIREMENTS

- For pictures:**
  - Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
  - Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
  - Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
  - Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
  - For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.
- For announcements:**
  - Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

- the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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- E-mail: [editor@saipantribune.com](mailto:editor@saipantribune.com) or [jayvee\\_vallejera@saipantribune.com](mailto:jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com).
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
- To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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## NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- \*11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at [www.nmicrimestoppers.com](http://www.nmicrimestoppers.com)



## O P I N I O N

## Letter to the Editor

## Legalize, decriminalize marijuana in the CNMI

Rep. Stanley Torres wants marijuana use and possession legalized and he is right! People have been using marijuana every since it was learned that it could alter your state of mind and it will continue to be used as long as this herb-bearing plant exist.

In other words people are going to smoke pot until the end of the world. Social scientist, scholars, researchers, and many legal minds of today equate the criminalization of marijuana with the same mistake made with the prohibition of alcohol. When Prohibition was instituted some of the worst mobsters in America's history were created and now we have created drug cartels in a drug war that is causing the slaughter of competing cartels, innocent people, government officials, and law enforcement. The drug war is now over two decades old and we are no closer to ending it than we were when it started and it's getting worse every day.

Even in the good book it tells us to use every herb-bearing plant and the son of God also gave us an example on altering our minds when he told us to drink wine (alcohol and pot) "in moderation." It is OK to alter your state of mind in moderation for the right reasons and under the right conditions. Unlike in the past, we are now making our young teenagers convicted felons for using and selling marijuana when it used to be considered a party favor and even an accepted practice by many locals. In fact, the reason many people are against the use of marijuana today is only because it is illegal and not because of the effects. If you compare the effects of marijuana with alcohol it is easy to see which one is really the worst—alcohol. But alcohol can be taxed and politicians can't tax marijuana because it grows freely in the ground—God given. Just imagine how much more money will be injected into our economy if we legalize for medical use and minimize punishment for use to a small fine. All the money that used to be spent on pot will be spent on more important things like family needs and wants because people can grow their own which will

also led to a decline in the use of hard drugs. Safety sensitive jobs are the only exceptions to the use of marijuana.

The use of marijuana in America was criminalized primarily because a very rich and powerful Randolph Herst, a newspaper publisher, wanted to corner the paper market and he didn't want "hemp" (marijuana) to be used which was stronger and better than the wood-base paper he was producing. Here we are almost a hundred years later still suffering from bad politics and a bad law that failed to yield any fruit which is something we should have learned the from the prohibition of alcohol. There are many good things about the use of marijuana beyond medical usage but the illegalization has prevented these fruits from every manifesting.

We can't use a law to stop people from a desire to alter their state of mind—drunks still drink and drive even after being caught and spending time in jail. Education is our only hope for helping people with mind-altering substances as we have seen with alcohol. People that only use pot usually don't speed in their car and weave all over the street, they don't pick fights because they only want peace when they are high and they only want laughter and enjoyment from the experience. It is the people who mix alcohol and other hard drugs with marijuana who are creating the real social problems—not the pot heads.

Until federal law changes, the CNMI needs to do just like California and decriminalize marijuana for medical use and place a small fine of \$5.00 for personal use and growth. Farmers of large amounts should only face a \$25 fine. If the feds still want to eradicate marijuana let them but the penalties within the CNMI will only be a fine. Changing the punishment for pot use in the CNMI does not violate federal law and at the same time it will do a great deal to decline the use of hard drugs like ice. It will also create a tourist market from Asia that will be the envy our fellow U.S. territories and commonwealths in the Caribbean as a majority of American tourists go to these islands for the explicit purpose of relaxation and to smoke

good and cheap marijuana—it's a well known fact on the mainland. We will surely see the cruise liners lining up at the port from Asia if we decriminalize marijuana with a small fine for procession.

The law criminalizing marijuana is a federal law that was created before the CNMI was conceived and the people of the CNMI can implement this law at the state level with a punishment of our own choosing. The legislature should at the very least give the people the opportunity to determine if marijuana should be legalized for medical use and decriminalized to a "non-felony crime" for individual usage and growth. One of the most hated person's in the CNMI's recent past is the federal officer (initial B) who first started busting marijuana growers and he was literally chased forced to leave the CNMI *per sona na grata*. The older generation of locals will know him by name and he is still talked about and hated today by many.

The best thing the legislature can do is to give this issue to the people because they will be fighting forever among themselves forever. They just need to agree that they disagree and put a bill together for the people to decide like California has done or we will only continue to perpetuate the War on Drugs, creating teenage felons and missing the fruits of marijuana use. Our legislature needs to get the politics out of this social phenomenon and leave it up to education not the criminal justice system. It really defies logic to think that a person sitting down relaxing with a funny cigarette is somehow *infringing on the rights of others*, which is suppose to be the basis of our laws. Criminalizing marijuana was a bad law to start with and it needs to be changed. Thank you Rep. Torres for having the wisdom and the political will power to say and do something about this age old problem. Please get the initiative on the ballot to help the sick, our tourist market, and to help the many local people who want to use marijuana for medicinal purposes.

**Juan Jesus Agulto**  
*Kagman IV*

a return to blind adherence to bygone traditions that have lost their relevance to the milieu of our time. In fact, there is much of the practices of my own religious upbringing that have long ago been consigned to the dustbin of history, but it does not negate the spiritual dimension that religion midwife'd in my personal journey.

Transformation of any kind—planetary, societal, ethno-racial, cultural, physical, psychological—begins with the transformed me. *Live as if it is the first day of your life*, the bumper sticker reads. I am floating Monday-morning-Me at the lagoon for a few minutes before sundown; it is well to be baptized on the first day of one's life!

## Pacific

## Reports: Tongan gov't, officials caused ferry loss

**NUKU'ALOFA, Tonga (AP)**—The Tongan ferry that sank last year and claimed 74 lives was aged, overloaded and unfit for the open sea, according to a government inquiry that blames senior government and state shipping officials for the disaster.

Three people already have been charged with manslaughter in the sinking of the Princess Ashika, and it was not immediately clear if more criminal charges would be filed following the report.

"It was scandalous that such a maritime disaster could ever have been allowed to occur. It was a result of systemic and individual failures," the royal commission report said. "The tragedy is that they were all easily preventable and the deaths were completely senseless."

The report was handed to Tonga's King George Tupou V on Wednesday, and parts of it have been disclosed. The Cabinet will consider the report Tuesday, and it will be translated from English into Tongan before its full public release.

The commission, chaired by Tongan Supreme Court Judge Warwick Andrew, faults failures by officials in buying and oper-

ating the vessel that foundered and sank in deep water Aug. 5.

The roll-on, roll-off ferry was built in Japan in 1972 for in-shore calm water sailing only. Some 164 feet (50 meters) long, it weighed 677 tons and was designed to carry about 400 passengers and 15 crew.

As early as 1985 when it was in service in Fiji, it was classed as unseaworthy.

The royal commission found that when it sailed on its fatal voyage in August 2009 "the MV Princess Ashika was unquestionably unseaworthy and in an appalling condition. It should never have been allowed to sail in Tonga under any conditions."

A claim by officials "that the vessel was in good condition or well maintained is not only patently absurd, but dishonest," the report said. It also notes the ferry was "grossly overloaded" the day it sank.

The Royal Commission said it considered evidence regarding civil responsibility, but that determining criminal responsibility was up to other authorities. Police have said their investigations are continuing.

One of the three men already

charged, John Jonesse, former managing director of the state-owned Shipping Company of Polynesia Ltd., was barred from leaving Tonga on Wednesday by Chief Justice Anthony Ford after a special Supreme Court sitting.

Jonesse, a New Zealand national who advised Tongan authorities to buy the ferry, faces 25 serious charges relating to the Ashika ferry disaster, including manslaughter. Manslaughter in Tonga carries a maximum prison sentence of 25 years.

Jonesse had "clearly misled the Board and company secretary as to the condition of the ship. His conduct and actions were deplorable," the Commission report said.

Local media reported that among senior political figures named in the report was Prime Minister Feleti Sevele, cited for hiding information, including e-mails.

The commission said Transport Minister Paul Karalus had "absolutely no basis to suggest that the vessel was seaworthy" and that if he had carried out his duties properly, "the MV Princess Ashika should never have been purchased."

## Fiji bewildered by Comm Games ban

**WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)**—Fiji's National Olympic Committee said it could not understand the basis of a Court of Arbitration for Sport decision upholding its ban from October's Commonwealth Games in New Delhi.

Fiji appealed the ban to the CAS in Lausanne, Switzerland and urged its athletes to stay in training for the games, but the court Thursday rejected its appeal.

"We can't seem to understand how the decision could have gone against us because the Commonwealth Games Federation constitution says if

your country is in the Commonwealth, then your athletes can take part," Fiji Amateur Sports and National Olympic Committee president Vidya Lakhan told Radio New Zealand.

"That was the basis of our appeal to CAS. We're very much interested in finding out the grounds on which our appeal has been dismissed."

Fiji was suspended from the Commonwealth last September when military ruler Commodore Frank Bainimarama, who seized power in a 2006 coup, refused to bow to demands to hold elections next year.

## PACIFIC BRIEFS

## Former Tahiti president charged with obstruction

**PAPEETE, Tahiti** (Tahitipress)—The Papeete prosecutor has called for a US\$16,850/12,570 euros fine for veteran Tahitian politician Gaston Flosse for obstructing a probe on a now disbanded intelligence unit. This comes after Tahiti's Audit Chamber tried to get more information on the SED (service études et documentations). The SED was linked to the President's office, when Flosse was French Polynesia President until 2004. This intelligence unit was reportedly closely monitoring political rivals. But many documents related to this unit have vanished and some computer hard drives have been wiped clean as well. Flosse claimed he did not give any orders to destroy documents. The 78-year-old Senator was Tahiti's president from 1984-2004. The Papeete Court

ruling is expected April 27.

## Futuna islanders reluctant to accept relief aid

**MELBOURNE, Australia** (Radio Australia)—In the wake of Cyclone Tomas, it's been three weeks of hard work for the inhabitants of Futuna. Tomas destroyed 90 per cent of the French territory's traditional houses, more than half their public amenities and most of their crops. The French Red Cross was quick to move into the worst-hit areas, bringing supplies and relief workers from New Caledonia. However, a combination of pride and traditional values, has made many of Futuna's leaders and residents reluctant to accept the assistance from outside. But as Bernadette Papilio-Halagahau head of the Department of Culture for Wallis and Futuna, says the people of Futuna began the big task of rebuilding—even before foreign

help arrived. "People in Futuna are very brave because I guess also because of historical experiences, they are used to those kinds of damages, they have started building already and of course the french military are also there."

## French TV plans digital upgrade in pacific

**WELLINGTON, New Zealand** (Radio New Zealand International)—French television is to invest 40 million US dollars over three years into public broadcasting in the French overseas territories as they adopt digital television. The switch is to start in November and will allow the territories to get up to ten channels, including six public ones. New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna are among the territories to benefit. The annual transmission costs of digital television are expected to be 27 million US dollars.

## MONDAY

From Page 11

jumbo superstition, at worst, that adherents are themselves to account for the violent return to irrelevant but comfortable literalism of sacred writ, and jingoistic loyalty to religious brand name and affiliation.

We are not advocating here



## Business

# Apple fans eagerly touch and swipe first iPads

SEATTLE (AP)—Now that the iPad is in the hands of early adopters, the hard work for Apple Inc. begins.

Eager customers intent on being among the first owners of this new class of gadgetry stood in long lines across the country Saturday. They seemed willing to buy first—and discover uses for the iPad later.

In some ways, it was reminiscent of the lines and hoopla surrounding the 2007 launch of the first iPhone. The difference: People knew then that the iPhone would replace their existing cell phone, an appliance that has become a must-have for everyone from uber-geeks to stay-at-home moms.

With the iPad, which fits somewhere between phone and computer, Apple must convince people who already have smart phones, laptops, e-book readers, set-top boxes and home broadband connections that they need another device that serves many of the same purposes.

Many of the earliest iPad buyers say they will have a better idea of what they'll use it for only after they've had it for a while.

That didn't stop them from imagining, though.

Beth Goza has had iPhones and



Andres Schobel holds up two iPads as one of the first customers to buy an iPad on the first day of Apple iPad sales at an Apple Store in San Francisco, Saturday, April 3, 2010.

other smart phones, along with a MacBook Air laptop, yet she believes the iPad has a place in her digital lineup. She likened it to a professional tennis player owning different sneakers for grass, clay and concrete courts.

"At the end of the day, you can get by with one or the other," she said outside an Apple store in Seattle's University Village mall.

But she clearly doesn't want to just "get by." She's already dreaming up specific uses for her iPad, such as knitting applications to help her keep track of her place in a complicated pattern.

Danita Shneidman, a woman in her 60s, wanted one to look at photos and videos of her first grandchild, born this week in Boston.

And then there's Ray Majewski, who went to an Apple store in Freehold, N.J., with his 10-year-old daughter, Julia. The iPad is partly as a reward for her straight A's in school, and partly a present for himself.

"I like the electronic books, and my daughter is really getting into them as well," Majewski said. "I was thinking of getting a Kindle (e-book reader) but then said to myself, 'Why not get an iPad because I can get so much more from that than just reading books?'"

## US delaying currencies report amid China dispute

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Obama administration is delaying a report to Congress on currency policies amid calls from some lawmakers that it should cite China as a currency manipulator harmful to the U.S. economy.

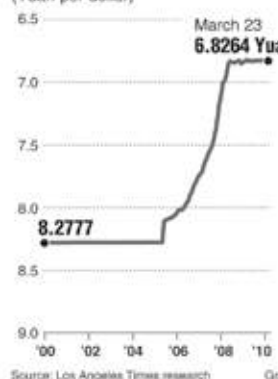
Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner said Saturday that he will delay publication of the report, due April 15, because several high-level international meetings in the coming months will be a better way to advance the United States' position.

Still, Geithner said in a statement that China should adopt "a more market-oriented exchange rate" to balance the U.S. trade deficit with China, which totaled \$226.8 billion last year - the largest imbalance with any country. U.S. manufacturers say China's yuan is undervalued by as much as 40 percent and is a big reason for the massive trade deficit.

A stronger yuan versus the dollar would make U.S. products less expensive in China, while making Chinese goods more expensive for

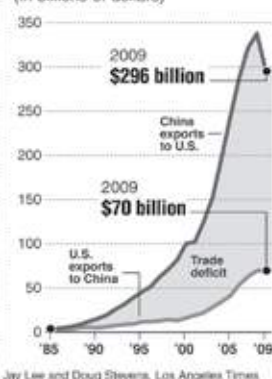
### Unbalanced trade

U.S.-China exchange rate, 2000-2010  
(Yuan per dollar)



Source: Los Angeles Times research

U.S.-China trade deficit, 1985-2009  
(In billions of dollars)



Graphic: Jay Lee and Doug Stevens, Los Angeles Times

### Countries' economic profiles



American consumers.

Geithner's announcement came a day after the White House signaled an improvement in relations between the two countries amid news that Chinese President Hu Jintao will attend a summit on nuclear security later this month in Washington. President Barack Obama told the Chinese leader during an hourlong phone

call that he welcomed the decision.

The delay of the Treasury report could be designed to avoid embarrassing the Chinese at a time the administration is enlisting their aid on sensitive issues of nuclear security and Iran's nuclear program. Hu is scheduled to attend the summit the same week that the report normally is due.

## Economy adds jobs at fastest pace in three years

WASHINGTON (AP)—The nation added jobs at the fastest pace in three years last month as factories, stores, hospitals and the census all brought workers on board—the surest sign yet that the worst employment market in a generation has finally snapped back.

The unemployment rate stayed at 9.7 percent for the third month in a row, the Labor Department said Friday. Economists actually consider that a hopeful sign because it means more people are encouraged and starting to look for work.

"This recovery is for real," said Chris Rupkey, economist at the Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi.

Overall, the economy added 162,000 jobs for the month. About a third of the gains came from the census, with much more to come: About 700,000 head-counters will be hired to tally the nation's popula-

tion this spring.

Economists took heart that even aside from the population count, the private sector added 123,000 jobs for the month, the most since May 2007.

Hiring is not expected to be robust enough anytime soon to significantly bring down the unemployment rate. Economists think unemployment will probably still be above 9 percent by the November midterm elections, making Democratic and Republican incumbents in Congress vulnerable, particularly in hard-hit states such as Michigan, Nevada and Rhode Island.

President Barack Obama seized on the positive numbers in the jobs report and took partial credit for them. But with 15 million people still out of work, he also acknowledged that the economy will be recuperating for a long time to come.

## Flash, and some nods to recession, at NY auto show

NEW YORK (AP)—Teenage car enthusiast Frank Vecchio stood in awe before a Rolls-Royce Ghost with a \$301,575 sticker price—admiring a detail he had seen only in a video game.

"Wow, it's even got a suicide door!" said the 15-year-old, referring to the rear-hinged car door of the 1930s gangster era.

If it flew open, it could catch air and blow away along with the driver—or it could be easily swung open to dispose of somebody, according to popular lore.

On Saturday, the New York International Auto Show offered everything from concessions to the recession, like the smallest car on the U.S. market, an \$11,900 Smart Fortwo, to the show's most expensive wheels,

a Rolls-Royce Phantom Drophead Coupe costing \$518,800.

The Phantom also comes with a safe, modern version of the suicide door, more politely called a coach door, and a personal concierge - available by phone to help with anything the owner needs, including travel plans and restaurant reservations.

About 100 Phantoms, taking several months each to handcraft in England, are now on U.S. roads.

Nearby, a white Smart car off a French assembly line had letters painted on its door saying it comes with "half price parking in NYC."

And though crash tests show it meets U.S. safety standards, Peter Greco says he wouldn't want his 20-

something children to be driving the 8-foot-10-inch-long two-seater on an American highway.

"We're not there yet; we're not ready for this - as long as you have big cars like the (18.5-foot-long) Cadillac Escalade on the road," said the banker as he crawled out of the tiny vehicle. "It's not a good mix."

Despite the economy, there was plenty of pricey in-your-face flash and muscle at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, on Manhattan's West Side.

For \$115,000, a fully loaded Jaguar XJL Supersport is tricked out with an electronic button that boosts acceleration while automatically tightening the driver's seat belt. The base price of the XJL series is about \$80,000.

## Census jobs provide short but welcome opportunity

WASHINGTON (AP)—As census workers gear up to count us, they are counting themselves lucky to be employed.

This once-a-decade temporary work force is giving a timely boost to the battered job market. Census workers accounted for nearly a third of the jobs added in March, when hiring occurred at the fastest pace in three years.

Over the next two months, another 600,000 to 700,000 census jobs will be added, putting \$10 to \$25 an hour into the pockets of some desperate job seekers.

Although these jobs will only last through mid-July, economists say they will provide a fortuitous stream of income to families and act as an employment bridge until summer, when more private employers are expected

to ramp up hiring.

The census hiring also comes in a year when President Barack Obama's economic stimulus package will peter out. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that stimulus spending added more than 1 million jobs last year.

"It comes at a good time because you're transitioning from an economy that's slowly recovering to sustainable growth," said John Canally, an economist at Boston-based LPL Financial. "This is a good patchwork until then."

Still, the census paychecks won't have a meaningful impact on the overall economy.

The government has set aside \$7.8 billion to conduct the census. That pales compared with last year's stimulus package of \$862 billion.



# Nation

## Justice Stevens to leave while Obama in office

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens says he “will surely” retire while President Barack Obama is still in office, giving

the president the opportunity to maintain the high court’s ideological balance.

Stevens said in newspaper interviews on the Web Saturday

that he will decide soon on the timing of his retirement, whether it will be this year or next. Stevens, the leader of the court’s liberals, turns 90 this month and

is the oldest justice.

His departure would give Obama his second nomination to the court, enabling him to ensure there would continue to be at least four liberal-leaning justices. The high court is often split 5 to 4 on major cases, with the vote of moderate Justice Anthony Kennedy often deciding which side prevails.

“I will surely do it while he’s still president,” Stevens told The Washington Post.

But Stevens, who was named to the court by Republican President Gerald R. Ford in 1975, says he still loves the job, and says he continues to write the

first draft of his own opinions.

Stevens says if it ever gets to point where he stopped doing that, it would be a sign he wasn’t up to the job anymore.

Stevens is the second-oldest justice in the court’s history, after Oliver Wendell Holmes. He is the seventh-longest-serving justice, with more than 34 years on the court.

Another liberal, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, had surgery last year for early-stage pancreatic cancer. While Ginsburg has been her usual energetic self, including frequent speaking engagements and a teaching stint in Europe, long-

term survival rates for pancreatic cancer are low.

Ginsburg, 77, has said she intends to serve into her early 80s, and she has hired her clerks for the court term that begins in October 2010.

Justices are reluctant to retire in bunches, mainly because they want the nine-member court as close to full strength as possible.

Stevens also is nearing two longevity records. When he joined the court, he replaced the longest-serving justice, William O. Douglas, and would need to serve until mid-July 2012 to top that service record. He would surpass Holmes as the oldest sitting justice if he were to remain on the court until Feb. 24, 2011.



Stevens

## Nuclear heartland anxious about missile cuts

**JUDITH GAP, Mont.** (AP)—Here in America’s nuclear heartland, where underground missile silos dot the landscape, a proposed U.S.-Russia treaty to reduce nuclear weapons is nothing short of alarming.

The military workers who maintain those missiles support cities as large as Great Falls, where 40 percent of the economy depends upon Malmstrom Air Force Base, and businesses as small as the Judith Gap Mercantile, where passing airmen buy milkshakes by the dozen. If they follow the missiles out of town, the economies here could be crippled.

The fate of the 450 intercontinental ballistic missiles around Malmstrom, F.E. War-

ren Air Force Base near Cheyenne, Wyo., and Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota is not yet clear, but politicians and community leaders are ready to fight to keep them. Even if it means not cutting nuclear weapons.

“I would keep Malmstrom at full strength, regardless,” Great Falls Mayor Michael Winters said. “Each and every facet of our economy has something to do with Malmstrom.”

Montana, North Dakota and Wyoming business leaders over the past year have lobbied their congressional delegations, all the while avoiding arguments about whose base is more important, said Dale Steenbergen, president and CEO of the Greater Cheyenne

Chamber of Commerce.

Instead, they are trying to persuade Congress to keep the ICBM silos at full strength, arguing that they are relatively cheap to maintain and are more secure compared to bombers and submarines that also carry nuclear weapons.

“You can sink a sub or shoot down a plane. That’s very different from attacking American soil, and that’s what you’d have to do (to get to the ICBM silos),” Steenbergen said.

The proposed treaty would require the U.S. and Russia to reduce their nuclear warheads over the next seven years by 30 percent, to 1,550 from a previous maximum of 2,200. But it doesn’t say where those cuts would come.

## 5 charged in gang rape of girl, 7, in NJ apartment

**TRENTON, N.J.** (AP)—Two men and three teenage boys were charged Saturday with gang-raping a 7-year-old girl who was sold by her 15-year-old stepsister during a party at a crime-ridden apartment building in the state’s capital, police said.

Details of the arrests were announced at a Saturday evening news conference outside police headquarters. Police Director Irving Bradley said detectives had been working around the clock since the crime was reported March 28.

“We did get a lot of cooperation from the community, which helped break this case,” Bradley said.

Those arrested included Gregory Joseph Leary, 20, in

custody since Friday, when he was charged with having sex with the 15-year-old. The other four are Timear Lewis, 19, and boys ages 13, 14 and 17. Each was charged with aggravated sexual assault and child endangerment.

Prosecutors likely would seek to try all of them as adults, Mercer County prosecutor Joseph Bocchini said.

The suspects, who were to be assigned public defenders, were being held Saturday night and couldn’t be contacted for comment. There was no telephone listing for Lewis; a telephone for a G. Leary had been disconnected.

The case shocked residents of the gritty Rowan Towers apart-

ment building, where three of those arrested live, police Capt. Joseph Juniak said.

Building management has stepped up its security presence there and promised additional safety measures. Residents have expressed skepticism that the apartments would become safer.

Police say the 15-year-old girl went to a party with some men at Rowan Towers on March 28 and the younger girl tagged along because she was worried about her stepsister’s safety. They say the 15-year-old sold sex to men and boys there, then took money to let them touch the younger girl. They say the touching turned to forcible sex as at least seven men raped the 7-year-old.



### EASTER EGG HUNT

Volunteer Loren Wagner, of Phoenix, sets out eggs prior to the start of an Easter egg hunt at the 11th Annual Egg Hunt and Festival Saturday, April 3, 2010, in Laveen, Ariz.

## Air Force to launch robotic winged space plane

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—After a decade of development, the Air Force this month plans to launch a robotic spacecraft resembling a small space shuttle to conduct technology tests in orbit and then glide home to a California runway.

The ultimate purpose of the X-37B Orbital Test Vehicle and details about the craft, which has been passed between several government agencies, however, remain a mystery as it is prepared for launch April 19 from Cape Canaveral, Fla.

“As long as you’re confused you’re in good shape,” said defense analyst John Pike, director of Globalsecurity.org. “I looked into this a couple of years ago—the entire sort of hypersonic, suborbital, scramjet nest of programs—of which there are upwards of a dozen. The more I studied it the less I understood it.”

The quietly scheduled launch culminates the project’s long and expensive journey from NASA to the Pentagon’s research and



This undated image released by the U.S. Air Force shows the X-37B spacecraft.

development arm and then to a secretive Air Force unit.

Hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent on the X-37 program, but the current total has not been released.

The launch date, landing sites and a fact sheet were released by Air Force spokeswoman Maj. Angie I. Blair. She said more information would be released soon, but questions on cost and other matters submitted by e-mail weren’t answered by Friday.

While the massive space shuttles have been likened to

cargo-hauling trucks, the X-37B is more like a sports car, with the equivalent trunk capacity.

Built by Boeing Co.’s Phantom Works, the 11,000-pound craft is 9 1/2 feet tall and just over 29 feet long, with a wingspan of less than 15 feet. It has two angled tail fins rather than a single vertical stabilizer.

Unlike the shuttle, it will be launched like a satellite, housed in a fairing atop an expendable Atlas V rocket, and deploy solar panels to provide electrical power in orbit.

### ACROSS THE NATION

#### 4 killed in Los Angeles restaurant shooting

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—Authorities say four people are dead and one is wounded in a shooting at a restaurant in North Hollywood. Los Angeles Police officer Rosario Herrera says officers responded to an emergency call Saturday afternoon from the Hot Spot Cafe on Riverside Drive and found three people dead. The gunman had fled. Herrera says two people were taken to a hospital, where one later died. The fifth person is in critical condition.

#### Denver bus runs red light; 1 killed, 15 injured

**DENVER** (AP)—A Denver city bus struck two vehicles after running a red light at a downtown intersection Saturday, killing one person and injuring 15 others, police said. Police spokesman Matthew Murray said the Regional Transportation District bus was northbound on Lincoln Street, a major route in the city, when it collided with a car and a pickup truck at about

5 p.m. A man in the car died at a hospital of his injuries, and a woman in the car was in critical condition, Murray said. Fourteen other people were taken to St. Anthony’s and Denver General hospitals, and one of them was listed in critical condition, Murray said. Denver Fire Department personnel had to extricate several people from the three vehicles.

#### Police: Teen shoots classmate, self at NY station

**COOPERSTOWN, N.Y.** (AP)—A white schoolboy with a rifle chased a black classmate into a police station near the National Baseball Hall of Fame and shot him, then himself, as the lone officer on duty closed in, authorities said. The shooter, 16, was hospitalized with a serious wound after shooting himself in the chin, police said Saturday. The other boy, also 16, was hit in the arm. He was treated at a hospital and released. The shooting happened Friday afternoon at the small headquarters of the Cooperstown Police Department, across the street from the baseball museum.



# Asia

## Karzai's anti-West comments criticized by Afghans

KABUL (AP)—President Hamid Karzai's scathing attack on the West for its role in Afghanistan drew criticism from Afghan politicians after the White House described his remarks as genuinely troubling.

Despite Karzai's attempt at damage control, including a telephone conversation Saturday with Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, his allegations laid bare the growing mistrust between the Afghan government and its international partners as the United

States and NATO ramp up troop levels to try to turn back the Taliban.

Karzai's speech Thursday also heightened an ongoing political power struggle between Karzai and an increasingly independent-minded parliament, which has refused to confirm nearly half of his Cabinet nominees because they were allegedly incompetent, corrupt or too weak to resist pressure from powerful people.



Karzai

During the speech, Karzai lashed out against the U.N. and the international community, accusing them of perpetrating a "vast fraud" in last year's presidential election as part of a conspiracy to deny him re-election or tarnish his victory.

He also said foreigners were looking for excuses not to help fund the September parliamentary elections because they "want a parliament that is weak and

for me to be an ineffective president."

Karzai also suggested that parliament members who threw out a presidential decree strengthening his power over the election process were serving foreign interests.

That drew a sharp rebuke Saturday from Yunus Qanooni, speaker of the lower house of parliament and a former Karzai Cabinet minister who finished second in the 2004 presidential election.

"This is the house of the people and all the members have been elected," Qanooni told parliament. "It's not possible that we would be influenced by foreigners."

Other lawmakers also expressed out-

rage over Karzai's remarks, which they considered a clumsy attempt to appeal to Afghan national pride which has been strained by the presence of thousands of foreign troops.

"This was an irresponsible speech by President Karzai," lawmaker Sardar Mohammad Rahman Ogholi of the northern province of Faryab told The Associated Press. "Karzai is feeling isolated and without political allies. ... The fight against terrorism, corruption, and narcotics requires a strong government. Unfortunately, the Karzai government is far too weak to fight all these elements."

## Filipinos nailed to the cross in Good Friday rites



A Filipino penitent is nailed to a cross during yearly religious rituals in San Juan village, San Fernando town, Pampanga province, northern Philippines on Friday April 2, 2010.

SAN FERNANDO, Philippines (AP)—Filipino devotees had themselves nailed to crosses Friday to remember Jesus Christ's suffering and death—an annual rite rejected by church leaders in the predominantly Roman Catholic country.

At least 23 people were nailed to crosses in three villages in northern Pampanga province's San Fernando city to mark Good Friday, with foreigners banned from taking part this year except as spectators, said Ching Pangilinan, a city tourism officer and one of the organizers.

She said the ban was imposed after some foreigners took part in previous

years just to make a film or make fun of the rites.

"We don't want them to just make a mockery out of the tradition of the people here," Pangilinan said.

The event Friday drew more than 10,000 Philippine and foreign spectators, she said.

Many gathered at San Pedro Cutud, a farming village where devotees dressed in robes and tin crowns walked to a dusty mound carrying wooden crosses on their backs. At the mound, men nailed their hands and feet to the crosses.

Among the devotees was Ruben Enaje, a 49-year-old sign painter who

was nailed to a cross for the 24th time as his way of thanking God for his survival after falling from a building.

Mary Jane Mamangon, a 34-year-old rice cake vendor, was the lone female devotee to be nailed to a cross this year in San Juan village. It was her 14th time.

She said she started when she was 18 and has taken part in the annual rites on and off to seek God's help in saving her ill grandmother and now her younger sister, who is suffering from cancer.

"I do it because I have seen that it works," she told The Associated Press. "I saw how my grandmother recovered from her illness."

March 26 and sank a few hours later during a routine patrol. Fifty-eight crew members, including the captain, were rescued soon after.

No cause has been determined for the blast and, despite some speculation, there has been no confirmation of North Korean involvement in the sinking, which occurred near the countries' disputed western sea border with North Korea—a scene of three bloody inter-Korean naval battles.

Defense Minister Kim Tae-young has said a floating mine dispatched from North Korea was one possible explanation. A mine left over from the 1950-53 Korean War may also have struck the ship, he said.

## SKorea starts works to salvage sunken navy ship

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea started work Sunday to salvage a navy ship that sank following a mysterious explosion near the sea border with North Korea, hours after ending its underwater hunt for dozens of sailors on board, officials said.

Families of the sailors asked the military to suspend the operation for fear of additional casualties among divers as chances of finding survivors grew increasingly unlikely after Saturday's discovery of one of the 46 sailors' bodies.

Officials said they stopped the underwater search out of respect for the families' request and will work to recover the 1,200-ton Cheonan.

Civilian ship-recovery companies

were commissioned to be in charge of the salvage work while military ships will continue searching the surface of the ocean to find any floating debris and bodies, according to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

A large civilian recovery crane has already been near the site of sinking while another crane was on its way to the area, a navy officer said on condition of anonymity citing department policy. A team of civilian divers planned to plunge underwater Sunday and Monday to study how to tie the wreckage with chains, he added.

The official said it was expected to take at least 15 days to lift up the wreckage of the ship, which exploded

## Protesters paralyze Bangkok's commercial center

BANGKOK (AP)—Thousands of anti-government protesters, defying a government order, occupied the commercial heart of Thailand's capital for a second day Sunday, vowing to hang on until new elections are called.

Many of the mainly poor, rural protesters known as the Red Shirts slept the night on trash-strewn pavements in the shadow of luxury hotels and shopping centers.

Area office buildings and more than a half-dozen shopping malls, normally packed with weekend shoppers, closed for security reasons for the second day Sunday. Traffic in the area was paralyzed.

Local newspapers quoted the Thai Chamber of Commerce as saying the economic losses from the takeover of the shopping and hotel area could reach 500 million baht (\$15 million) a day.

Police passed out leaflets and used loudspeakers to order demonstrators to leave, saying they could face imprisonment and fines since they violated emergency decrees by disrupt-

ing traffic and commerce.

Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva announced on nationwide television Sunday morning that the two sides were reaching a possible compromise, but at the rally site, the protesters tore up many of the leaflets and showed no signs of leaving.

The Red Shirts' fourth weekend demonstration in Bangkok targeted the district of upscale hotels and glitzy shopping malls as they groped for tactics to force Abhisit to meet their demands, after failing to oust his government through peaceful mass marches and negotiations.

About 10,000 protesters gathered in the area Saturday, according to Metropolitan Police spokesman Piya Utayo. He said the total number of demonstrators, including those elsewhere in the city and on the move, reached nearly 55,000.

Among the businesses affected were the Siam Paragon, among the fanciest shopping malls in Asia, and hotels like the Grant Hyatt Erawan Hotel and the InterContinental Bangkok.

### ASIAN BRIEFS

#### Rescuers prepare for search in flooded China mine

XIANGNING, China (AP)—Rescue workers set up equipment and prepared Sunday to mount an operation to try to find survivors among 153 trapped miners in a northern China, saying they have not given up hope one week after the mine flooded. But no decisions have been made yet on a next step after a dive team entered the mine Saturday and called the situation underground "very difficult," with black, murky water complicating efforts to reach sites where rescuers hope miners have survived. No further signs of life have been detected after apparent tapping was heard Friday, said Wen Changjin, an official with the news center set up at the mine in the northern province of Shanxi.

#### Japan indicts activist who boarded whaling ship

TOKYO (AP)—Prosecutors Friday indicted an anti-whaling activist from New Zealand on charges that could lead to a yearslong prison term after he boarded a Japanese harpoon boat to protest the ship's whale-hunting expe-

dition in Antarctic seas. Peter Bethune had jumped aboard the Shonan Maru 2 in February during the annual face-off between whalers and their opponents with the stated goal of making a citizen's arrest of the captain, while handing over a \$3 million bill for the destruction of a Sea Shepherd protest ship a month earlier. The 44-year-old was held on board and arrested March 12 immediately after the ship returned to Japan. He has since been in custody in Tokyo.

#### 6 troops, 30 Taliban die in NW Pakistan clashes

PARACHINAR, Pakistan (AP)—Pakistani troops fought gunbattles and bombed militant hide-outs in a Taliban stronghold near the Afghan border Saturday, leaving six soldiers and 30 militants dead, officials said. It was part of a recently launched operation in Orakzai tribal region aimed at flushing out foreign and Pakistani militants who last year fled an army onslaught further south. Government official Sami Ullah said both ground forces and army helicopters took part in Saturday's fighting that killed 30 insurgents. The troops captured six militants after the fighting, he added.



# World

## Hometown of Russian suicide bomber rattled

**KOSTEK, Russia** (AP)—When a 16-year-old girl married a militant Islamist separatist entangled in a long-running and bloody struggle against Russian government forces, her relatives in this dusty North Caucasus village say they disowned her immediately.

They knew they could face torture from Russian security forces or even death for associating with the militants, and they knew their Dzhannet Abdurakhmanova, still just a schoolgirl, could easily be killed.

But they never expected her to be dispatched to Moscow as a suicide bomber to blow herself up on a subway train.

Abdurakhmanova, whose husband was killed by government forces in December, and another young widow have been accused of carrying out

Monday's twin suicide bombings, which killed 40 people and injured 90. They were the first suicide attacks in the capital since 2004.

Both women were from the North Caucasus, a patchwork of predominantly Muslim provinces and home to a fierce Islamic insurgency that has been fueled by frequent killings, kidnappings and torture of residents by government forces.

Chechen rebel leader Doku Umarov claimed responsibility for the subway attacks, saying they were retaliation for the deaths of four garlic-picking villagers who were slain on Feb. 11.

In Kostek, a poor rural village in the province of Dagestan where Abdurakhmanova grew up, a piercing silence hangs in the air. Men on the main square

stare transfixed at newcomers, then turn away whispering. The village feels dangerous even for those who live in the provincial capital, about 100 kilometers (60 miles) away.

Abdurakhmanova's suicide attack has brought unwanted attention.

"We turned our back on her when she married that one about two years ago," said a 20-year-old man, Abdurakhmanova's cousin, who refused to give his name for fear of reprisals.

"We didn't have anything to do with Dzhannet and we never wanted to" after her marriage, he said before disappearing into their grandmother's single-story brick home, one of the nicest in the village.

On Friday, a leading Russian newspaper published a photo of the doe-eyed teenager,

partly veiled, in the embrace of a bearded man - both grasping handguns.

The report said Abdurakhmanova met her husband, Umalat Magomedov, in an

Internet chat and that he then set up a meeting and drove her away by force when she was still 16.

After her husband's death, Abdurakhmanova may have

fallen under the influence of Islamists, who try to persuade widows and other relatives to sacrifice their lives to avenge their slain husbands, sons and brothers.



AP

This undated picture provided Friday, April 2, 2010 by the Russian news agency NewsTeam, is claimed by the Russian Kommersant newspaper to show Dzhannet Abdurakhmanova, left, and her husband Islamist rebel Umalat Magomedov.

## White supremacist leader killed in South Africa

**JOHANNESBURG** (AP)—South Africa's white supremacist leader Eugene Terreblanche was bludgeoned to death by two of his farm workers Saturday in an apparent dispute over wages, police said, amid growing racial tensions in the once white-led country.

Terreblanche, 69, was leader of the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging movement, better known as the AWB, that wanted to create three all-white republics within South Africa in which blacks would be allowed only as guest workers.

The opposition Democratic Alliance party blamed increasing racial tensions for the killing.

"This happened in a province

where racial tension in the rural farming community is increasingly being fueled by irresponsible racist utterances" by two members of the governing African National Congress, said the Democratic Alliance legislator for that constituency, Juanita Terreblanche.

Terreblanche, no relative of the far-right leader, said her party did not share his political convictions but warned that the attack on him could be seen as an attack on the diverse components of South Africa's democracy.

President Jacob Zuma appealed for calm following "this terrible deed." In a statement, he asked "South Africans not to allow agent provocateurs to take

advantage of this situation by inciting or fueling racial hatred."

The killing comes 10 weeks before South Africa prepares to host the first World Cup soccer tournament on African soil, with massive expenditures on infrastructure being questioned as hundreds of thousands of tickets and hotel rooms remain unsold.

The South African Press Association quoted police spokeswoman Adele Myburgh as saying that Terreblanche was attacked by a 21-year-old man and a 15-year-old boy who worked for him on his farm outside Ventersdorp, about 110 kilometers (68 miles) northwest of Johannesburg.

Saturday. A leading Catholic archbishop said he was "stunned" by the comments. The remarks released Saturday marked the first time Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams has spoken publicly on the crisis engulfing the Catholic Church. The comments come ahead of a planned visit to England and Scotland by Pope Benedict XVI later this year. "I was speaking to an Irish friend recently who was saying that it's quite difficult in some parts of Ireland to go down the street wearing a clerical collar now," Williams told the BBC. "And an institution so deeply bound into the life of a society, suddenly becoming, suddenly losing all credibility—that's not just a problem for the church, it is a problem for everybody in Ireland, I think."

### Mexican mom denies role in her 4-year-old's death

**MEXICO CITY** (AP)—A defense attorney says a Mexican woman suspected in the death of her 4-year-old daughter denies involvement. The case of Paulette Gebara Farah has riveted Mexico because of the nationwide campaign her parents launched to find her. The girl was reported missing March 22 and her body was found more than a week later in her home, wedged between the mattress and the frame of her own bed. Mother Lisette Farah is being held as suspect.

## Small coterie advises pope, but decisions his own

**VATICAN CITY** (AP)—Pope Benedict XVI has surrounded himself with a small group of men he feels he can trust, but he acts very much on his own. That isolation and shunning of advice have frequently created problems and are increasingly under scrutiny as the clerical sex scandal inches closer to him.

Early on in his 5-year-old papacy, Benedict provoked a

furious reaction from Muslims when he linked the Prophet Muhammad to violence in a speech Vatican officials said he wrote himself.

Then he enraged Jews for the "unforeseen mishap" of being unaware that a bishop whose excommunication he lifted was a Holocaust-denier. The pope similarly is unlikely to have known that his personal preacher, during a solemn Good Friday

sermon, would compare the uproar over the church's sex abuse scandal to persecution of Jews.

Vatican spokesman the Rev. Federico Lombardi—who has frequently had to put out these fires—said Saturday that such a comparison was not the line of the Vatican, the Catholic Church or even the intent of the preacher himself, Rev. Raniero Cantalamessa.

That the Vatican has had a communications problem during Benedict's papacy is fairly well-established. Amid a swirling scandal at the pope's feet, Lombardi recently said he hadn't spoken to the pontiff about his letter to Irish Catholics, and that his information on Benedict's views on it was second hand.

While part of the problem is Benedict's reserved personality, perhaps more to blame is a culture of secrecy at the Vatican, rooted in church history for centuries, and its tendency to shun being held accountable to the secular world.



AP

Pope Benedict XVI, at center, followed by Bishop Guido Marini, walks with a candle during the Easter Vigil Mass in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican, Saturday, April 3, 2010.

## Russian spacecraft docks at orbiting station

**MOSCOW** (AP)—A Russian space official says a Soyuz craft carrying an American and two Russian astronauts has docked successfully at the International Space Station.

Russia's Mission Control spokesman Valery Lyndin says the spacecraft hooked up with the orbiting station using an au-

tomatic docking system at 9:26 a.m. Moscow time (0526 GMT) Sunday.

The Soyuz was launched Friday from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

California native Tracy Caldwell Dyson and Russians Alexander Skvortsov and Mikhail Kornienko are join-

ing the station's three current inhabitants.

Within three days, a seven-person crew aboard the Shuttle Discovery will dock at the station for a 13-day mission. During this period, four women will be in space at the same time, which is a first in history.

### WORLD BRIEFS

#### Iraqis in military uniforms kill 24 in Sunni area

**BAGHDAD** (AP)—Gunmen trying to pass themselves off as U.S. and Iraqi soldiers raided a Sunni village outside Baghdad and killed at least 24 people in an execution-style attack, apparently targeting a Sunni group that revolted against al-Qaida in Iraq, authorities and witnesses said Saturday. The bloodshed late Friday comes amid increasing concerns that insurgents will take advantage of Iraq's political turmoil to further destabilize the country, nearly a month after parliamentary elections failed to give any candidate a decisive win. Many fear a drawn-out political debate could spill over into violence and complicate American efforts to speed up troop withdrawals in the coming months. Details remained sketchy, but police said gunmen traveling in at least four cars raided three homes in Hawr Rijab, killing 19 men and five women after binding them in handcuffs. Some of the victims, police said, were marched onto the roofs of their homes and slain there.

#### Anglican leader: Irish church lost all credibility

**LONDON** (AP)—The Roman Catholic Church in Ireland has lost all credibility because of its mishandling of abuse by priests, the leader of the Anglican church said in remarks released



# Health & Fitness

ATLANTA (AP)—Small taxes on soda do little to reduce soft drink consumption or prevent childhood obesity, but larger levies probably would, according to new research.

The study is being released as a recent wave of proposals would raise soda taxes or create new ones on sugared beverages. But they'll have to be a lot steeper than current taxes, which are generally 4 percent or less, said Roland Sturm, lead author of the new research.

"Small taxes will not prevent obesity," said Sturm, a senior economist at the Rand Corp. in Santa Monica, Calif.

Sturm and his colleagues used information from a 2004 national survey of about 7,300 fifth-graders. The researchers looked at how the children's height and weight had changed over the previous two years and how often the kids said they drank soda and sports drinks. The researchers also reviewed taxes on carbonated drinks that were in effect in 2004.

Roughly two-thirds of the children lived in states that had a tax on soda greater than on other food items. The highest was 7 cents tax on each dollar's worth of soda. The average was about 4 cents.

They found the taxes made no real difference on overall soda consumption or on obesity for kids overall. They did have a small effect on certain children—especially those from families with an annual income of \$25,000 or less. Those kids—who drank about seven cans of soda a week, on average—drank one less can because of the taxes,

## Study: Small soda taxes don't dent obesity

By MIKE STOBBE  
AP MEDICAL WRITER



An Oct. 18, 2003 file photo shows Yale Professor Kelly Brownell in Greenwich Conn.

Sturm said.

However, if the taxes were more like 18 cents on the dollar, Sturm calculated it would make a significant difference.

The research is being published online Thursday in the journal Health Affairs. The Rand study was funded by the federal government and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Most states exempt grocery food from sales taxes. But in recent years, candy and soft drinks have been increasingly targeted, either through a tax or removal of an ex-

**ON THE NET**  
Health Affairs soda tax study: <http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/content/full/hlthaff.2009.0061v1>

isting sales tax exemption.

The children in the study were from 40 states, 20 of which had soda taxes when the study was done.

More than 30 states have some form of soda tax today, averaging about 5 cents per dollar of soda.

In the last month, Colorado removed a 3 percent sales tax exemption for candy and soda. Philadelphia's mayor pro-

posed a 2 cents-per-ounce tax on sugary drinks, which would add 24 cents to the price of a can of Coke.

Most of the taxes tend to be enough to bring in some extra money for struggling state budgets, but small enough not to rile soda manufacturers or significantly change buying habits, said Kelly Brownell, director of Yale University's Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity.

Taxes have to be large enough to affect consumption," said Brownell, who has called for a tax as high as 12 percent.

But most people don't want their

soda taxed, according to the American Beverage Association, which represents soda manufacturers.

Association officials noted that Maine voters last fall rejected a soda tax. And in a press release last week, the organization pointed to a recent survey of 1,000 U.S. adults by Rasmussen Reports that found 56 percent of Americans are against taxes on candy and soda.

The beverage association did not pay for the telephone survey, said Debra Falk, a spokeswoman for the polling firm.

The Rand study confirms that small taxes on soda don't reduce obesity, and offers no evidence that larger taxes would do any better, said Christopher Gindlesperger, spokesman for beverage association.

"Taxes don't work. What does work is balancing the diet and exercise," he said.

## Chocolate said to reduce heart risk

LONDON (AP)—The Easter Bunny might lower your chances of having a heart problem. According to a new study, small doses of chocolate every day could decrease your risk of having a heart attack or stroke by nearly 40 percent.

German researchers followed nearly 20,000 people over eight years, sending them several questionnaires about their diet and exercise habits.

They found people who had an average of six grams of chocolate per day—or about one square of a chocolate bar—had a 39 percent lower risk of either a heart attack or stroke. The study is scheduled to be published Wednesday in the European Heart Journal.

Previous studies have suggested dark chocolate in small amounts could be good for you, but this is the first study to track its effects over such a long period of time. Experts think the flavonols contained in chocolate are responsible. Flavonols, also found in vegetables and red wine, help the muscles in blood vessels widen, which leads to a drop in blood pressure.

"It's a bit too early to come up with recommendations that people should eat more chocolate, but if people replace sugar or high-fat snacks with a little piece of dark chocolate, that might help," said Brian Buijsse, a nutritional epidemiologist at the German Institute of Human Nutrition in Nuthetal, Germany, the study's lead author.

The people tracked by Buijsse and colleagues had no history of heart problems, had similar habits for risk factors like smoking and exercise,

and did not vary widely in their Body Mass Index.

Since the study only observed people and did not give them chocolate directly to test what its effects were, experts said more research was needed to determine the candy's exact impact on the body. The study was paid for by the German government and the European Union.

Doctors also warned that eating large amounts of chocolate could lead to weight gain, a major risk factor for heart problems and strokes.

"This is not a prescription to eat more chocolate," said Dr. Robert Eckel, a professor of medicine at the University of Colorado and a past president of the American Heart Association. He was not linked to the study. "If we all had (a small amount) of chocolate every day for the rest of our lives, we would all gain a few pounds."

Eckel said it was amazing to find such a small amount of chocolate could have such a protective effect, but that more studies needed to be done to confirm its conclusions.

Alice Lichtenstein, a nutritionist at Tufts University School of Medicine, said it was difficult to link the reduction in heart disease and stroke risk to the chocolate alone, since there may have been other differences between the study participants.


"The relationship between chocolate and good health outcomes is still uncertain," she said. "If somebody really enjoys eating chocolate, then they should have a small amount of that and just really enjoy it," she said.

### Personal Trainer


## How flexible are you?

Here's an easy test that will let you assess how flexible your hips, thighs and lower back are:

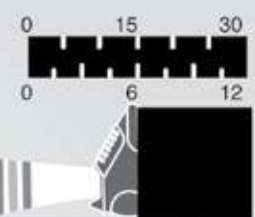
**1** Find a box or step 8 in. (20 cm) tall, a ruler, and a friend to help you take the test



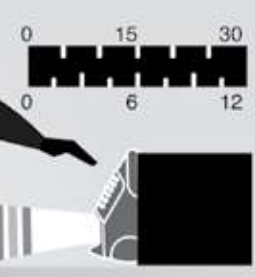
**2** Before taking the test, do a 5-minute aerobic warm-up by running gently in place; stretch to loosen your thighs, hips and back



**3** Sit with the soles of your feet against the box; have your helper hold a ruler with its zero point 6 in. (15 cm) in front of the box




**4** Reach as far forward as you can without bending your knees; have your helper check how far you reached



### Check your score on this table

	Women	Men
<b>High flexibility</b>	14 in. (35 cm) or more	15 in. (38 cm) or more
<b>Above average</b>	11-13 in. (26-34 cm)	12-14 in. (30-37 cm)
<b>Average</b>	7-10 in. (16-25 cm)	7-11 in. (16-29 cm)
<b>Below average</b>	4-6 in. (10-15 cm)	4-6 in. (10-15 cm)
<b>Low</b>	3 in. (9 cm) or less	3 in. (9 cm) or less

NOTE: Figures are rounded to make measurement easier



Begin regular stretching exercises, and you will be able to watch your score improve

These figures are for 20-year-olds; for each 10 years beyond that, subtract 1 in. (2.5 cm) to get the normal score

EXAMPLE: A 62-year-old woman who can reach 11 in. (28 cm) has excellent flexibility

Source: Wellness Guide to Lifelong Fitness, University of California at Berkeley    Graphic: Paul Trap

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# Life & Style

## 'Dynasty' oil tycoon John Forsythe dead at 92

**LOS ANGELES (AP)**—John Forsythe, the handsome, smooth-voiced actor who made his fortune as the scheming oil tycoon in TV's "Dynasty" and the voice of the leader of "Charlie's Angels," has died after a yearlong battle with cancer. He was 92.

Forsythe died late Thursday at his home in Santa Ynez from complications of pneumonia, publicist Harlan Boll said Friday.

"He died as he lived his life, with dignity and grace," daughter Brooke Forsythe said.

Despite his distinguished work in theater and films, Forsythe's greatest fame came from his role as Blake Carrington in producer Aaron Spelling's 1981-89 primetime soap opera "Dynasty."

Forsythe lent dignity to the tale of murder, deceit, adultery and high finance, which often brought Carrington into conflict with his flashy, vengeful former wife, Alexis Colby, played to the hilt by Joan Collins.

"He was one of the last of the true gentlemen of the acting profession," Collins said in a statement. "I enjoyed our nine years of feuding, fussing and fighting as the Carringtons."

Heather Locklear, another "Dynasty" co-star, called him "a

gentleman in every sense of the word," and a "gifted actor who knew the true meaning of being gracious and kind."

Forsythe was an important part of another hit Spelling series without being seen. From 1976 to 1981 he played the voice of Charlie, the boss who delivered assignments to his beautiful detectives, including Farrah Fawcett and Cheryl Ladd, via telephone in "Charlie's Angels."

"We were so happy when he agreed to be the voice of Charlie, and he always laughed about having to take a back seat to Farrah's hair," Spelling's widow Candy said in a statement.

Ladd, who lives near Forsythe, said she would miss him terribly.

"I'm mourning with the rest of the world for the talented, gorgeous, funny, intelligent John Forsythe," she said in a statement.

Forsythe evidenced little of the ego drive that motivates many actors. He viewed himself with a self-effacing humor, considering himself "a vastly usable, not wildly talented actor."

In a 1981 interview by The Associated Press, he also said: "I figure there are a few actors like Marlon Brando, George C. Scott and Laurence Olivier who

have been touched by the hand of God. I'm in the next bunch."

With his full head of silver hair, tanned face and soothing voice, Forsythe as Carrington

attracted the ardor of millions of female television viewers. "It's rather amusing at my advanced age (mid-60s) to become a sex symbol," he cracked.



In a July 7, 1983 photo, actor John Forsythe, poses during an interview in Los Angeles, Ca.

While he had small roles in a couple of films in the early 1940s, Forsythe's first successes were mainly on the stage. While serving during World War II, he was cast in Moss Hart's Air Force show "Winged Victory," along with many other future stars.

After the war, Forsythe became a founding member of the Actors Studio, recalling it as "a wildly stimulating place for a guy like me who was a babe in the woods. I never suspected there was that kind of artistry and psychological approach to acting."

Forsythe began appearing in television plays as early as 1947, and he continued his Broadway career. A role in Arthur Miller's "All My Sons" led to the awesome task of replacing Henry Fonda in "Mister Roberts."

He was next able to create a role of his own, as the naive Army officer in occupied Okinawa in "Teahouse of the August Moon." The play was a huge success, winning the Pulitzer Prize. "It gave me a sense of worth as an actor," Forsythe remarked.

The call to Hollywood was irresistible, and Forsythe came west to star in such films as "The Captive City," "The Glass Web" and "Escape from Fort Bravo."

His best break came in 1955 when he starred in Alfred Hitchcock's one attempt at whimsy, "The Trouble with Harry," about a corpse that kept turning up in a New England town.

Forsythe's film roles were limited because he was already busy in television. The comedy "Bachelor Father," in which he played a Hollywood lawyer who cared for his teenage niece, lasted from 1957 to 1962.

His later films included "Madame X" (opposite Lana Turner), "In Cold Blood" and Hitchcock's spy thriller "Topaz."

"And Justice for All" in 1979 marked a departure for the actor. Director Norman Jewison cast him as a judge with a kinky sex life.

Forsythe credited the role for causing him to be considered as the unscrupulous Carrington in "Dynasty."

"The producers didn't know what the hell they wanted," Forsythe recalled. "They talked to me in terms of J.R. in 'Dallas.' I said, 'Look, fellas, I don't want to play J.R. Part of my strength as an actor comes from what I've learned all these years: when you play a villain, you try to get the light touches; when you play a hero, you try to get in some of the warts.'"

### Death and Funeral Announcement

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

# EDMOND SALAS DEBRUM

BETTER KNOWN AS "NED"

BORN TO LIFE ON APRIL 4, 1952. NED WAS CALLED BY HIS CREATOR ON MARCH 30, 2010 AT THE AGE OF 57.

IN PARADISE HE NOW JOINS HIS  
PARENTS: ROBERT ANTHONY DEBRUM AND FELISISIMA SALAS DEBRUM  
BROTHER: RONALD SALAS DEBRUM  
MOTHER-IN-LAW: LETICIA PARUNGAO SARABILLO

SURVIVED BY HIS  
WIFE: LERIZA SARABILLO DEBRUM AND  
CHILDREN: FELICIA SARABILLO DEBRUM AND ROBERT ANTHONY DEBRUM  
BROTHERS AND SISTERS AND IN-LAW:  
LESLIE ANTHONY SALAS DEBRUM AND ELOISE KANNELY  
IDA SALAS DEBRUM AND PAUL CABRERA CAMACHO  
FATHER-IN-LAW: RAFAEL SARABILLO

DAILY MORNING MASS WILL BE OFFERED BEGINNING ON EASTER SUNDAY APRIL 04, 2010 AT 9:00AM AND 6:00 AM ON MONDAY AND TUESDAY, APRIL 05 AND 06, 2010.

ON APRIL 07, 2010 AT 7:30 A.M. HIS REMAINS WILL BE ESCORTED FROM BORJA FUNERAL HOME TO MOUNT CARMEL CATHEDRAL FOR PUBLIC VIEWING. MASS OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL WILL BE AT 10:00 AM FOLLOWED BY INTERMENT CHALAN KANOA CEMETERY.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS.  
THE FAMILY



# Friend says Jesse James wants to save marriage

**LOS ANGELES (AP)**—Jesse James is a “a broken man” and is hoping that rehab and some privacy will help him recover and save his marriage to Sandra Bullock, his friend and attorney said.

Joe Yanny told The Associated Press that allegations of marital infidelity against James and the ensuing media “feeding frenzy” have ruined the biker businessman’s life.

“This whole thing has destroyed Jesse’s entire universe,” Yanny said. “Right now, he’s a broken man.”

He said James is still in love with Bullock and hopes the marriage can be saved.

James checked into a rehabilitation center after weeks of reports that he cheated on Bullock throughout their marriage. Yanny declined to say what James is being treated for, but said people shouldn’t assume it is for sex addiction. He also wouldn’t rebut specific allegations lodged against the West Coast Choppers owner or say whether there

are plans for the couple to get a divorce.

“The allegations back and forth about what happened—those are private matters to be resolved between a husband and a wife,” Yanny said. “It’s not appropriate for a public airing.”

He said the vast majority of stories about James are untrue.

“Jesse is in love with Sandra,” Yanny said. “The single most important thing to Mr. James and the children is that the marriage somehow survive.”

James and his camp have said little since a woman told In Touch magazine that she carried on an affair with James while Bullock was shooting the blockbuster hit “The Blind Side.”

The film earned Bullock widespread acclaim that culminated with a best actress Oscar. Within days of her win, the cheating allegations broke and Bullock withdrew from the public eye.

James released a statement saying he had used “poor judgment” and deserved “everything bad that is com-

ing my way.”

Bullock has not spoken publicly about the matter, and her publicist did



This photo taken March 7, 2010 shows Jesse James arriving for the Vanity Fair Oscar party in West Hollywood, Calif.

not respond to e-mailed questions for this story. Public support for the actress has remained high as more women have stepped forward claiming they had affairs with James in recent years.

Bullock and James met in 2003 and were married in 2005. It seemed like an odd pairing—the Hollywood actress often called “America’s Sweetheart” marrying the tattooed biker who designed custom motorcycles and starred in reality shows such as “Monster Garage” and “Jesse James is a Dead Man.”

Yanny blasted media coverage of the case, saying the privacy of Bullock, James and his children had been repeatedly violated. “It’s nothing but voyeurism at this point,” he said. “Enough is enough.”

He said the coverage of the story

was overblown and that it lost its newsworthiness long ago. He said he is concerned about the media continuing to pursue James’ children and family while the 40-year-old is undergoing treatment.

“There are many more significant things in the world that people ought to be talking about and delving in to,” Yanny said.

He acknowledged James has made many mistakes in his life, but that he has also quietly supported numerous charities and his various businesses have created many jobs and opportunities for others.

Yanny said he expects James to persevere. “He certainly will come out of this a better man,” he said. “I hope he comes out of it with the things in life that he cherishes.”

## Death threats prompt tighter security for Andrews



**LOS ANGELES (AP)**—First she was secretly videotaped in the nude. Now she’s receiving death threats. At least a dozen e-mails had been sent to a media outlet threatening ESPN reporter and “Dancing With the Stars” contestant Erin Andrews since September, her attorney Marshall Grossman said.

The messages discuss the case of Michael David Barrett, who was sentenced last month to 2 1/2 years in federal prison for secretly shooting nude videos of Andrews, her attorney Marshall Grossman said.

“He refers to Barrett in his e-mail in a way to make clear to us that situation had some influence,” Grossman said, but added that the man appeared to

This March 15, 2010 file photo shows ESPN reporter Erin Andrews reacting during a news conference on the sentence of her stalker outside the U.S. District Court in Los Angeles.

have no ties to Barrett.

DirecTV provided the emails to Andrews’ representatives Thursday.

The e-mails were at first sexual, but the most recent were explicitly violent and “threatened Erin with murder,” Grossman said. They also had details about location and method.

The FBI has been notified, Grossman said. He said the man’s identity is known to law enforcement and is believed to live on the East Coast. An e-mail message left for an FBI spokeswoman was not immediately returned.

Andrews is not yet seeking a restraining order but has asked ABC to beef up its security on “Dancing with the Stars,” Grossman said.

Private security also has been hired to protect Andrews and her family.

Andrews has no plans of quitting the show.

“She’s not the type to be easily threatened,” Grossman said. “She has every intention to meet her obligations.”

## Elton John stage at Mexico ruins partly collapses

**MEXICO CITY (AP)**—Part of the stage being set up for a weekend concert by singer Elton John at Mexico’s famed Chichen Itza ruins collapsed during construction, injuring three workers, authorities said Thursday.

Two of the workers were treated for slight injuries and released, and the third was hospitalized with a broken leg. The British singer was not present when the accident occurred Wednesday night.

“There has been no discussion of canceling the event” scheduled for Saturday, said Francisco de Anda, a spokesman for Mexico’s National Institute of Anthropology and History, which is in charge of the country’s pre-Hispanic sites.

The institute said there was no damage to the 1,200-year-old Mayan ruins. De Anda said the stage was put up at a distance from the pyramid and temples, precisely to avoid any potential damage.

De Anda said the upper lighting rails of the metal structure collapsed onto the stage area. The rails are used to hold spotlights and other technical equipment.

He said outside experts had been



British musician Sir Elton John, left, speaks to gathered media as he arrives for the fifth anniversary show of the musical ‘Billy Elliot’ at a central London theatre, Wednesday, March 31, 2010.

called in to review the structure to ensure it—or a replacement—could be safely installed.

Some Mexicans have opposed holding concerts at the ruin site, claiming it demeans their cultural significance and endangers the stone structures.

More than a half dozen concerts

have been held at Chichen Itza since Luciano Pavarotti sang there in 1997. In 2008, tenor Placido Domingo drew about 4,000 spectators to a concert without incident.

Chichen Itza was named one of “New Seven Wonders of the World” in 2007.



## Source: Merkerson leaving ‘Law & Order’

In this April 27, 2009 photo, actress S. Epatha Merkerson attends the 2009 Matrix Awards, honoring women in the communications industry, in New York.

**NEW YORK (AP)**—S. Epatha Merkerson, the senior member of the “Law & Order” cast, is leaving after the show’s current 20th season. Merkerson, who joined the NBC drama in 1993 as New York police Lt. Anita Van Buren, has decided to exit after 16 years, according to a person close to the show who spoke on the condition of anonymity because that person wasn’t authorized to speak about cast changes.

Merkerson, who held firm on a series that has seen literally dozens of cast members come and go, has played a strong, no-nonsense supervisor in a Manhattan police precinct, primarily overseeing two detective characters (currently played by her co-stars Jeremy Sisto and Anthony Anderson).

But this season, Van Buren’s story line has taken a personal turn as she battles cancer, an illness that may figure into her departure from the show.

Will Van Buren die?

“Not necessarily,” Merkerson told Entertainment Weekly, which first reported her planned exit. “How ever they decide to take her out, it’ll be worthy of the character. Either way, it’ll be great for me because I get to act it.”

Early in the 57-year-old Merkerson’s career, she played Reba the Mail Lady on “Pee-wee’s Playhouse.” She won Emmy, Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild awards for her performance in HBO’s 2005 film “Lackawanna Blues.” In February, she won an NAACP Image Award for her role on “Law & Order.”

As Merkerson prepares to take her leave, “Law & Order” awaits news of whether it will be back next season. In recent years, the series has suffered a ratings slump. A renewal would make it TV’s longest-running drama. It currently ties “Gunsmoke” of a generation ago.



# Erykah Badu charged over Dallas nude video shoot

DALLAS (AP)—Neosoul singer Erykah Badu faces a disorderly conduct charge for her nude music video shoot in downtown Dallas' Dealey Plaza, officials announced Friday.

Badu, a Dallas native, performed a walking striptease in front of tourists and pedestrians during the March 13 shoot for Badu's "Window Seat" music video. The performance ended with a nude Badu acting out receiving a fatal gunshot to the head at the spot where President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963.

Sgt. Warren Mitchell said Friday the decision to cite Badu for disorderly conduct—a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to \$500—came after witness Ida Espinosa, 32, of Vernon, offered a sworn statement to police Thursday. Espinosa declined to comment to The Associated Press on Friday.



Dallas Police Sgt. Warren C. Mitchell during a news conference at police headquarters in Dallas Friday, April 2, 2010 announcing they have charged neosoul singer Erykah Badu with disorderly conduct for her nude video shoot on a downtown street at the spot where President John F. Kennedy was shot dead in 1963.

“Having a fact witness that was there is what let us file the charges,” Mitchell said. “After much discussion, we feel that these charges best fit her conduct. She disrobed in a public place without regard to individuals and small children who were close by.”

Mitchell said the department has had “people calling from all across the country to express their concern.” Mitchell said Badu can either fight the charge or pay the fine. He said a citation would be mailed to the singer.

Carla Sims, a spokeswoman for Badu, had no immediate comment Friday.

## Source: Charlie Sheen wants to bow out of sitcom

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Charlie Sheen is looking at a future without “Two and a Half Men.”

According to a person close to the actor, Sheen has told friends that he wants to leave the hit CBS comedy in which he's starred for seven years.

The person spoke Thursday on condition of anonymity because Sheen had made the remarks in private and had not intended them to be discussed publicly.

CBS had no comment, spokesman Phil Gonzales said Thursday. An after-hours call to Sheen's representatives was not immediately returned.

“Two and a Half Men,” which also stars Jon Cryer, is the top-rated comedy on TV and a key part of CBS' Monday night lineup. Last year, CBS gave the show a three-year renewal, through the 2011-12 season, but Sheen's contract is up at the end of the current season.

Sheen, 44, has tired of the demands of a weekly show and wants to focus on movies, the person close to him said. Sheen is in the upcoming film “Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps,” a

sequel to the 1987 “Wall Street” in which he starred.

Sheen's desire to exit the sitcom was reported by People magazine online Thursday.

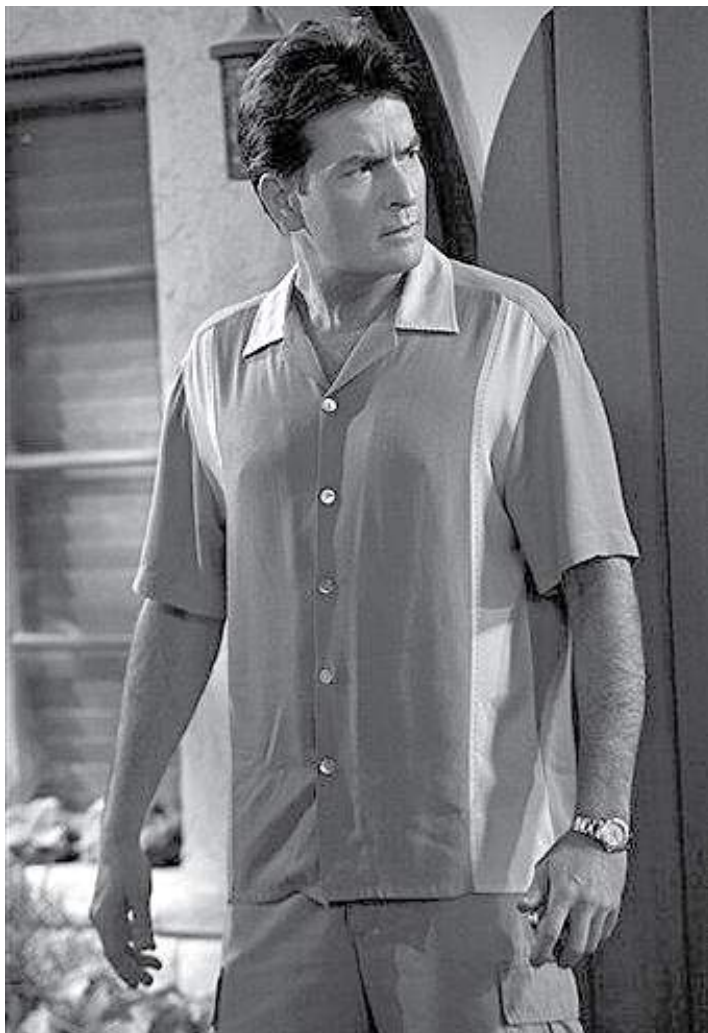
The actor is grappling with legal problems arising from a fight with his wife in Aspen, Colo., last December. He is charged with assault, criminal mischief and menacing, which carries a possible sentence of one to three years in prison.

Sheen pleaded not guilty in Colorado's Pitkin County District Court last month and faces a jury trial in July.

He entered a rehab facility for undisclosed treatment in February, temporarily forcing “Two and a Half Men” to halt production.

CBS and series producer Warner Bros. Television issued a statement of support when Sheen sought treatment and wished him well.

In this file image released by CBS, Charlie Sheen is shown in a scene from the CBS comedy, “Two and a Half Men.” Sheen is looking at a future without “Two and a Half Men.”



## Gay rights video with Paquin causes site to crash

NEW YORK (AP)—A gay rights campaign that features a declaration of bisexuality by Anna Paquin has received so much traffic that its Web site crashed.

The campaign was launched Thursday by Cyndi Lauper's True Colors Fund. The Web-based initiative hopes to educate for “the advancement of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender equality.”

The campaign drew particular interest because the video features Paquin, the 27-year-old star of HBO's “True Blood,” declaring she's bisexual.

The Web site, wegiveadamn.org, said Friday that it was “overwhelmed” by the “enormous traffic.” Additional servers have been added.

The video also includes ap-



In this photo taken on March 7, 2010, Anna Paquin arrives at the Vanity Fair Oscar party on in West Hollywood, Calif.

pearances by Elton John, Whoopi Goldberg, Jason Mraz, Cynthia Nixon and others.

## Lil Wayne thanks fans while launching new Web site

NEW YORK (AP)—Lil Wayne wants his fans to know that his spirit and love will “never be confined to prison walls.”

The Grammy Award-winning rapper's message was posted Friday to his new Web site. He was sentenced in March to a year in jail for having a loaded gun on his tour bus.

The 27-year-old says he's in good spirits and thinks about his four children daily. He says: “I just hope my love and adoration for them provides a temporary bandage on a wound I unknowingly inflicted on them.”

Lil Wayne also says he'll be blogging soon for ESPN. But ESPN the Magazine's Editor-in-Chief Gary Belsky (BEHL'-skee) says there are no plans for him to blog at the moment.

Lil Wayne says he'll be reach-



In this Oct. 21, 2009 file photo, Rapper Lil Wayne enters Manhattan criminal court in New York.

ing out to fans through his Web site every week.

His “Tha Carter III” was the 2008 best-selling album and won a Grammy for best rap album.

## No reason to go it alone when times are tough

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN  
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby

**DEAR ABBY:** I am at my wits' end and feel my life is over. I just want to get my life back the way it was 10 years ago. In the past eight years I have lost two jobs. I am currently unemployed and in financial ruin. I see no way out. Every job I apply for wants to do a credit check, so there goes any good job I might have. I have no resources for a counselor since I have no health insurance and nobody for a sounding board. Please help me see the light at the end of the tunnel. I feel virtually alone.

TROUBLED IN VIRGINIA

**DEAR TROUBLED:** First of all, you are not alone. At last count, millions of fellow Americans were in the same boat. When people are out of work for an extended period, debts do tend to pile up. But if you are upfront about it during a job interview, I am sure that fact will be taken into consideration.

The job market is beginning to thaw, so please keep trying and do not give up hope. There are support groups for people who are out of work—and a place to start looking for one would be a bulletin board at the unemployment office in your area. Use your local library as a resource to find support groups on the Web. Network with other people you know who are unemployed. Inquire at churches and synagogues because some of them offer these services. Also, ask at the mayor's office or city hall, and at community centers. Help is everywhere; you need to get out and look for it.

**DEAR ABBY:** My father has been short-tempered for as long as I can remember. He never beat us, but he spanked us plenty as a means of discipline when we were growing up. Now this anger is random; he makes every family event a nightmare for anyone involved. He insists on planning events at their home, and screams and degrades any of us “kids” (and Mom) if we do something other than his way.

Shortly after my sister's divorce a few years ago, my father met with our priest to discuss his anger issues, but it didn't change anything. We've suggested anger management or counseling, but he tells us we're “overreacting” and blames my sister's drama as an excuse for his behavior.

I am expecting my first child, and my husband and I are afraid of the effect Dad's behavior will have on our little one. My sister's children are all afraid of my father. While they respect him, they constantly worry about when the next blowup will happen. I don't want to cut anyone out of my life, but how can I deal with this?

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Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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# Butler does it—again—and will play for title



**INDIANAPOLIS (AP)**—Kansas—gone. Kentucky—gone. Syracuse—gone. Little Butler—still going.

How's that for a Hollywood hoops script. Call it "Hoosiers," the sequel.

Gordon Hayward had 19 points and nine rebounds, including one with 2 seconds left that sealed the game. The small school looked anything but, taking down another of college basketball's biggest names with a 52-50 victory over Michigan State in the Final Four on Saturday night.

Butler (33-4) will play No. 1 seed Duke, a 78-57 winner over West Virginia, in Monday night's title game. In the Bulldogs' hometown, no less.

"We've been talking about the next game all year, and it's great to be able to say the next game's for a national championship," Hayward said.

The entire Hoosier state is along for the ride. Indiana and Purdue may be the state's traditional basketball powerhouses, but it's little Butler—enrollment 4,200—that's big time now.

"If I was not playing, I'd be a Butler fan," Michigan State coach Tom Izzo said. "I like they way they play, I like their story. They play like a Big Ten team."

Michigan State (28-9) has been living on the edge all tournament, ravaged by injuries and squeaking through game after game, and this night was no different. After trailing by as much as seven in the second half, Draymond Green made a pair of free throws to pull Michigan State within 50-49 with 56 seconds left.

Ronald Nored missed a jumper, and Michigan State got the rebound. But Hayward wouldn't give the driving Green an inch, forcing him to put up an awkward layup that didn't come close. Nored scooped up the rebound, and Green had no choice but to foul him, ending the big fella's game.

Nored, who had been just 3 for 12 from the line in the tournament, made both, and the Bulldogs had a 52-49 lead with 6 seconds to play.

"One thing about us is there's never a sense of fear," Nored said. "We're confident in everything we do."

After a timeout, the Spartans inbounded the ball and Butler was all over them, choosing to foul rather than take a chance on the Spartans getting off a 3—like they did to beat Maryland at the buzzer. Korie Lucious made the first and bricked the second as Hayward came up with the ball to seal the victory and set off a party the likes of which Indiana hasn't seen since tiny Milan beat Muncie Central for the state title in 1954, the real-life inspiration for "Hoosiers."

"I don't know if I got a piece of the ball, maybe a piece of his arm," Hayward said. "I'm just glad we got that last stop."

Although the Bulldogs are no plucky underdog, there's no doubting the connections between "Hoosiers" and Butler's magical run. In the movie, the final score was 42-40. The actual Milan final score - 32-30.

And Saturday night, 52-50, extending the nation's best winning streak to 25 - and counting.

Watching it all unfold was Bobby Plump, whose buzzer-beating jumper gave Milan the win.

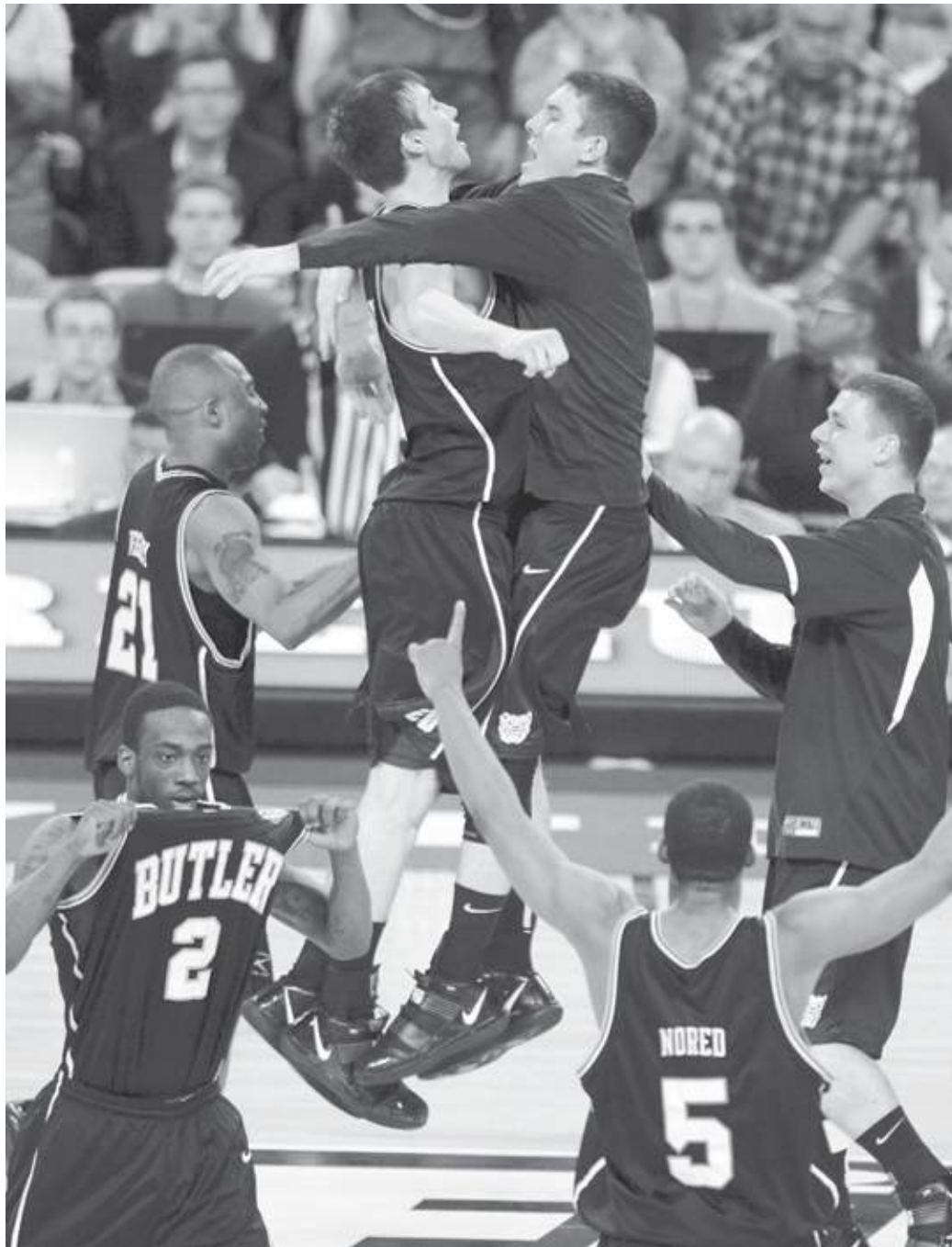
"I met more people tonight that said they graduated from Butler than seems possible," said Plump, who went on to play at Butler. "But it's a magical time, so who knows?"

And it gets better with each game.

Butler knocked off top-seeded Syracuse and followed with a victory over No. 2 seed Kansas State last weekend, the only Final Four team to beat the top two seeded teams in its region.

Just as Butler coach Brad Stevens did against the Orange and Wildcats, he found Michigan State's weakness and went after it. The offense-by-committee that had worked well enough without injured Kalin Lucas, who led the Spartans in scoring until blowing out his left Achilles' tendon in the second-round victory over Maryland, fell apart against the Bulldogs.

Durrell Summers, who had averaged 20 points in Michigan State's first four tournament games,



Butler players Gordon Hayward, center left, and Garrett Butcher embrace as they and teammates celebrate their 52-50 win over Michigan State in a men's NCAA Final Four semifinal college basketball game Saturday, April 3, 2010, in Indianapolis.

was held to 14. Green had 12 as did Lucious, who was playing in place of Lucas. Senior Raymar Morgan, who spent most of the game in foul trouble, finished with just four points.

Butler also forced fellow No. 5 seed Michigan State into 16 turnovers and held the Spartans to zero—yes, zero—fast-break points. The Bulldogs outrebounded Michigan State on the offensive glass, 11 to 8.

"We had our chances to win the game, no matter what the circumstances, how many injuries, how many guys we had in foul trouble," Izzo said. "We just couldn't get in rhythm with anything."

Perhaps most shocking, Butler outmuscled the bigger, bulkier Spartans—and have the battle scars to prove it. Hayward had a bloody lip by the time the night was over. Matt Howard got knocked silly in a collision with Green. Shelvin Mack spent most of the second half on the bench with cramps in his legs, and Stevens was unsure of his availability for Monday.

"It was one of the more physical games we've been involved in," Izzo said. "Playing in the Big Ten, that's a lot to say."

Want to know what The Butler Way is? Just watch a tape of this game.

It wasn't the prettiest of finishes. Butler went almost 11 minutes without a field goal after Willie Veasley's layup with 12:19 left—and it almost seemed as if the first team to score a basket was going to win.

But the Bulldogs weren't flustered to be playing on the game's biggest stage and locked down whenever they had to.

"It did seem like it was a long time," said Hayward, who had only six points in the second half. "But for us, as long as we guard, we feel like we can be in the game. That's what we've tried to do all year."

The finish was a bitter disappointment for the Spartans, who were playing in their sixth Final Four in 12 years and had hoped to get back to the national title game after being routed by North Carolina in Detroit last year. Instead, they'll have to watch another group of local boys delight the hometown fans. No team has won the national title in their home state since UCLA in 1975, when the Final Four was down the road from Westwood in San Diego.

## No. 1 Duke 78, No. 2 West Virginia 57

**INDIANAPOLIS (AP)**—After tossing a big, wet blanket on one feel-good story, Duke gets to go after another.

They don't call 'em the Devils for nothing.

Jon Scheyer scored 23 points Saturday night to lift Duke, the team so many folks love to hate, to a 78-57 victory over West Virginia and set up a meeting against tiny Butler - a classic matchup of big vs. little, with the national title on the line.

"I think they're one of the best teams in the country," Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski said of his upcoming opponent, which has won 25 straight. "I think a Cinderella would be more if somebody had eight or nine losses and pulled some upsets."

Still, Butler is a No. 5 seed. And in a tournament turned upside down, the Blue Devils (34-5) were the only No. 1 seed to make it to the Final Four.

Their trip, however, wasn't totally predictable or expected. Duke had gone six long years since its last appearance and hasn't been to the final since winning it all nine years ago - a veritable century by Tobacco Road standards. Now, this group of Blue Devils has a chance to give Coach K his fourth national championship.

"It's everything," senior center Brian Zoubek

said. "This is the culmination of four years for me. To have a shot at the championship my senior year, after everything we've been through, is a dream come true."

This was a wire-to-wire pullaway against the West Virginia team coached by alum Bob Huggins, who led the Mountaineers (31-7) on a 10-game winning streak that included the Big East tournament title and ended with a trip to the Final Four.

It was an inspiring journey, the first for West Virginia in 51 years, back when Jerry West wore the old gold and blue.

Huggins returned to West Virginia to bring an elusive title back home to a state that loves its flagship school like few others. But any chance of that ended with 8:59 left, when the Mountaineers' star, Da'Sean Butler, twisted his left knee and, to add insult to injury, got called for a charge as he crumpled to the ground.

The sequence left him writhing in pain under the basket and his coach, the Huggy Bear, came out to the floor, first to yell at the refs, then to kneel down and tenderly cup the head of his star—the player who, more than anyone, made this run possible.

"He just told me not to worry about it, that I'll be fine," Butler said. "And I told him that it hurts right now, but if I can get back out there, then I'll get back out there."

He didn't. The 17-point-per-game scorer finished with 10, and was held to a mere basket in the first half while the Blue Devils were building their lead to as many as 13. Wellington Smith led the Mountaineers with 12 points.

Meanwhile, Duke stayed on a road that could lead to the school's fourth championship despite the lack of a true superstar or an NBA lottery pick—no Christian Laettner or Shane Battiers or Grant Hills on this squad.

Instead, this is a group of players who do what they do well and fill their roles perfectly.

"We won this game as a team," forward Kyle Singler said. "It wasn't just put on my shoulders, or Jon's or Nolan's. We won this game from all sides contributing."

Singler scored 21 points for the Blue Devils and Nolan Smith added 19 points and six assists, a pair of performances that, added to Scheyer's, showed exactly how good Duke can be when all of the "Big 3" are playing well on the same night.

Zoubek, all 7-foot-1 of him, clogged up the middle, along with 6-10 brothers Mason and Miles Plumlee. Zoubek finished with 10 rebounds, five on the offensive glass.

"I've watched a lot of tape. I haven't seen them play that well," Huggins said. "And we didn't play very well. And, you know, that happens."

The Blue Devils won a lot of games this season on defense and rebounding, not that un-Duke-like 44 percent shooting, good for eighth in the 12-team Atlantic Coast Conference.

On Saturday, though, the shots started dropping, too. Shredding West Virginia's ballyhooed 1-3-1 zone trap, the Blue Devils made 52.7 percent. Singler, coming off an 0-for-10 performance in the regional victory over Baylor, went 8 for 16. Scheyer, who was 1 for 11 in a win over Cal the first weekend, went 7 for 13.

"We felt comfortable no matter what they did," Scheyer said.

Not surprisingly, West Virginia had few answers. Joe Mazzulla, who scored a career-high 17 points to lift the Mountaineers to their upset over Kentucky in the East Regional, finished with only four in this one and had to wear a new uniform after Zoubek drew blood while conking him on the head early in the game.

Mazzulla was starting in place of injured point guard Darryl "Truck" Bryant, who broke his right foot earlier in the tournament and had held out slim hope of playing in Indy. Hard to imagine his presence would have changed much.

The final 10 minutes were played in front of a quickly thinning crowd at Lucas Oil Stadium, the majority of whom had come to see Butler's 52-50 win over Michigan State earlier in the night.



# Durant helps Thunder clinch playoff spot



**DALLAS (AP)**—The Oklahoma City Thunder have transformed from doormat to dangerous playoff team.

Kevin Durant scored 23 points, Jeff Green added 22 and the Thunder clinched a playoff spot with a 121-116 victory over the Dallas Mavericks on Saturday night.

Russell Westbrook and Nick Collison added 17 points each to help the Thunder end a nine-game road losing streak against the Mavericks dating to when the team was based in Seattle.

Oklahoma City missed the playoffs last season after relocating from Seattle. The Thunder are the NBA's most improved team this season, more than doubling their 23 victories in 2008-09.

"It's a great feeling, but I've been impressed with our guys' work ethic all year long and I know that's not going to change," coach Scott Brooks said.

The Thunder's young players didn't do any postgame celebrating. Their explanation? They have a home game Sunday against Minnesota, which has the worst record in the Western Conference.

"It's cool to celebrate after the game but we've got a quick turnaround ... so we've got to come out there and produce," Durant said. "Maybe on our day off we'll celebrate."

Durant led the way on both ends of the floor, matching a career high with five steals and chipping in five rebounds and five assists.

Dirk Nowitzki had 30 points and 13 rebounds for Dallas, and Jason Kidd added 24 points in the matchup of possible playoff opponents.

"They play hard," said Dallas' Jason Terry, who went 2 for 10 from the field, 0 for 6 from 3-point range, and finished with four points. "We might see them again in the playoffs. Who knows?"

The Mavericks are 5-6 since ending a season-best 13-game winning streak, a slump that has been rooted on the defensive end.

"When we won 13 in a row, the defense was much better," Mavericks center Brendan Haywood said. "We have to improve our intensity on defense."

The Thunder expanded an eight-point halftime lead to 13 in the third quarter, and took a 94-85 edge into the



Oklahoma City Thunder forward Kevin Durant (35) pumps his fist after scoring during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Dallas Mavericks in Dallas on Saturday, April 3, 2010.

final quarter.

Oklahoma City was ahead by 19 early in the fourth quarter before a 17-2 run by Dallas—capped by Nowitzki's two free throws with 2:40 left—pulled the Mavericks to 110-106.

J.J. Barea made one of two free throws with 52.7 remaining to get Dallas to 113-109, but Eric Maynor's 3-pointer from the left wing with 28.9 seconds left gave Oklahoma City a 116-109 advantage.

"I was open for the shot and the shot clock was going down and I was able to knock it down," said Maynor, who had 14 points. "Teammates trust in

each other, that's how it works."

Dallas was in front 37-35 after one quarter, setting a season high for the opening quarter and shooting 75 percent (15 of 20) from the floor. The bad news for the Mavericks: the Thunder burned Dallas' defense for 14 of 24 from the field, getting 10 points each from Durant and Green.

"We had a great offensive quarter, 37 points is a huge number," Mavericks coach Rick Carlisle said. "But our defense was very disappointing."

## Bucks 107, Suns 98

At Milwaukee, Brandon Jennings

scored 23 points as Milwaukee beat Phoenix to end the Suns' winning streak at 10 games.

Now the Bucks must wait to see if they'll have to face life without Andrew Bogut after the standout center sustained an elbow injury.

Bogut, Milwaukee's leading scorer and rebounder, was taken to the hospital for tests after hurting his right elbow during a dunk in the second quarter. Bogut hung on the rim then crashed to the floor, awkwardly twisting his arm.

Amare Stoudemire had 22 points for the Suns, and Leandro Barbosa added 21.

## Hawks 91, Pistons 85

At Atlanta, Jamal Crawford scored 29 points, and Al Horford added 20 points and 14 rebounds as Atlanta beat Detroit for its 10th straight home victory.

The Hawks also handed Detroit its 11th straight loss, the Pistons' worst run since dropping 13 in a row Dec. 15-Jan. 11.

Josh Smith finished with 13 points and 14 rebounds to help the Hawks improve to 13-6 overall since Feb. 28. Rodney Stuckey had 22 points for the Pistons.

## Nuggets 98, Clippers 90

At Denver, Carmelo Anthony scored 24 points as Denver overcame a 21-point deficit to beat Los Angeles.

Nene added 18 points, and Chauncey Billups and Johan Petro had 14 points apiece in helping Denver win its second in a row since a 1-5 stretch. Denver improved to 50-27, the Nuggets' third consecutive 50-win season.

With five games remaining in the regular season, the Nuggets pulled into a tie with Utah for first place in the Northwest Division, along with tying the Jazz, Dallas and Phoenix for the second seed in the Western Conference playoffs.

Eric Gordon had 23 points for the Clippers.

## Bulls 96, Bobcats 88

At Chicago, Derrick Rose scored 26 points and Kirk Hinrich added 24 as Chicago beat Charlotte to boost its

playoff hopes.

They remained 1 1/2 games behind eighth-place Toronto in the Eastern Conference and pulled within three of Charlotte. Boris Diaw scored 18 points for the Bobcats.

## Nets 115, Hornets 87

At East Rutherford, New Jersey, rookie Terrence Williams had 14 points and a career-high 14 assists to lead New Jersey to its biggest win of the season.

Chris Douglas-Roberts scored 17 points, and Chris Humphries added 10 points and season-high tying 12 rebounds for New Jersey (11-65).

David West had 25 points, seven rebounds and six assists for New Orleans.

## Heat 97, Timberwolves 84

At Minneapolis, Dwyane Wade scored 39 points and Quentin Richardson added 14 as Miami beat Minnesota for its eighth straight victory.

Wade has scored at least 30 points in four of his last five games. He fueled critical runs at the end of each half to erase any hope Minnesota had of winning consecutive games after snapping a 16-game losing streak.

Al Jefferson and Ramon Sessions each had 12 points for Minnesota.

## Raptors 128, Sixers 123, OT

At Philadelphia, Chris Bosh led Toronto with 28 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists, and Sonny Weems added 18 points on 9-of-11 shooting.

Andre Iguodala had 33 points and 11 assists, both season highs, and eight rebounds for Philadelphia. Jrue Holiday added a career-high 25 points.

## Trail Blazers 98, Kings 87

At Sacramento, California, Brandon Roy led Portland with 24 points, Andre Miller added 23, and Nicolas Batum and LaMarcus Aldridge had 21 points each.

Portland rebounded from a loss at Denver on Thursday night for its 10th victory in 12 games. Beno Udrih led Sacramento with 22 points. The Kings have lost seven straight.

# Lakers sign Bryant to 3-year extension

**EL SEGUNDO, California (AP)**—Kobe Bryant is staying with the Los Angeles Lakers for another three years.

The deal announced Friday will begin after next season. Bryant is making \$23 million this season and is due to earn \$24.8 million next season.

"It's very rare to have a player play his entire career in one city, so I'm very excited," he said after the Lakers beat Utah 106-92.

Bryant would earn \$27.4 million in 2011-12, \$30.2 million the following season and more than \$32 million in his final year, when he would be 35.

"Good news," coach Phil Jackson said. "I expected that Kobe would sign. It's a good choice for him and the organization."

The deal means the Lakers achieved two main objectives going into the season—signing Bryant and Pau Gasol to extensions.

"We were able to accomplish those

goals, helping to keep the core of this team intact for the foreseeable future and in turn help to ensure the franchise's continued success over the years to come," General manager Mitch Kupchak said Friday on the team's Web site.

Gasol signed earlier in the season.

The 31-year Bryant could have terminated the last two years of his contract and become an unrestricted free agent last July. He could have secured a new, longer deal if he had opted out, but he wouldn't have necessarily made more money.

He said he had no thoughts about going elsewhere even while speculation had suggested otherwise.

"I knew I was going to be here," he said.

Bryant is averaging 27.2 points, 5.3 rebounds and 5.1 assists this season. He's helped the Lakers win four NBA titles, including last season when he

was the Finals MVP.

The 12-time All-Star was voted league MVP in 2008 when he helped the U.S. win a gold medal in the Beijing Olympics. This season, he moved past Jerry West to become the Lakers' all-time leading scorer.

"Good news," coach Phil Jackson said. "I expected that Kobe would sign. It's a good choice for him and the organization."

Jackson said Bryant's deal has no impact on his own possible extension. Jackson plans to evaluate his future after the season ends, when he'll have his annual checkup. He turns 65 in September.

"I personally sat down with Phil and indicated I'd love to have him back," Kupchak said. "It really falls into his lap and his timeline."

Bryant said he enjoys playing for Jackson and told him Friday that he "would love to see him come back."

## NBA BRIEFS

### Bucks' Bogut hospitalized with elbow injury

**MILWAUKEE (AP)**—Milwaukee Bucks center Andrew Bogut was hospitalized with a right elbow injury after falling hard to the floor and awkwardly twisting his arm against the Phoenix Suns on Saturday. With the Bucks leading late in the second quarter, Bogut took a long outlet pass in for a fast break slam dunk. He hung on the rim afterward, was touched in the back by the Suns' Amare Stoudemire and crashed to the court. Bogut appeared to wrench his elbow on the way down, then hit his head. A flagrant foul was called on Stoudemire, and he was booed loudly by Bucks fans, but television replays showed what appeared to be relatively light contact with Bogut. Bogut appeared to be in serious pain, briefly writhing on the floor before being helped to his feet by the team's medical staff. Hunched over and clutching his arm, he ran down the tunnel toward the locker room. Bogut, the No. 1 overall pick in the 2005 draft, is having a standout season for the re-

surgent Bucks, averaging a team-high 15.9 points and 10.3 rebounds. Bogut has shown ability on both ends of the court since he entered the league, but nagging injuries have hindered his development. The Australian star played only 36 games last season because of a back injury.

### Plane with Heat players makes emergency landing

**CHICAGO (AP)**—A plane carrying Miami Heat basketball players had to make an emergency landing in Chicago after a mechanic on board became ill. Team spokesman Tim Donovan said the plane safely landed early Sunday at O'Hare International Airport after the mechanic went into a diabetic coma. Donovan says the teams' trainers treated the mechanic while the plane was in the air and he was taken to a hospital in Chicago after the landing. Donovan says the mechanic is doing better now. The team was returning to Miami after beating the Minnesota Timberwolves 97-84 on Saturday.



# Kim, Molder lead after 3 rounds in Houston



**HUMBLE, Texas (AP)**—Anthony Kim never knew where his tee shots were going. Bryce Molder never got control of his swing.

Both saved themselves with their short games Saturday and ended up tied for the third-round lead in the Houston Open.

Kim missed 11 of 14 fairways, but relied on good putting to shoot a 3-under 69 that left him 10 under for the tournament. Molder, the second-round leader, made four bogeys and five birdies for a 71.

“It was a tough day,” Molder said. “I just couldn’t quite find the club in my swing, and it was just a little off.”

Vaughn Taylor (70) and Joe Ogilvie (71) were two strokes back at 8 under after both bo-

geyed the difficult 18th hole. Houston resident Jeff Maggert (70), Graham DeLaet (71) and Lee Westwood (72) were three strokes behind the leaders.

The players faced only light breezes after wind gusted up to 30 mph during the first two rounds. The mild conditions couldn’t help Kim, who was hitting tee shots into trouble all day.

“I don’t know what happened today,” Kim said. “Just spraying the ball off the tee, just hitting the worst shots I’ve hit probably this year.”

Kim finished second to Camilo Villegas at the Honda Classic, one of three top-25 finishes this year. He hasn’t held or shared the third-round lead since last year’s Canadian Open, where he finished third.

After three-plus years on the tour, Kim feels as if he’s ma-

tured enough to make smart decisions, when parts of his game are letting him down.

“I’ve learned a lot from past experiences,” he said. “It gives me confidence that I’m getting the ball up and down from a lot of places I probably shouldn’t. That’s dangerous, because you don’t want to rely on that.”

Kim pulled a 300-yard drive on the par-4 12th hole, then flopped a wedge from an awkward stance within a foot with a pond lurking on the other side of the green.

“I told my caddie, ‘If I don’t hit this perfectly, it’s going to go 50 yards in the water,’” Kim said.

He hooked another tee shot on the 17th hole, then wedged out of the rough to three feet. Kim saved par from behind the green at No. 18, chipping down the hill and sinking an 8-footer.

The title match against Heo was Schuler’s second straight three-set game. On Saturday, Schuler faced CNMI coach Jeff Race and won in the semis, 6-4, 6-7 (8-6), 6-1. The other semis pairing had Heo slipping past Peter Loyola, 6-0, 6-1.

Four other adult singles events were played in the San Antonio court over the weekend with Thea Minor, Mikayla Lopez, Jake Lee, and Christian Miller joining Heo in the winners circle.

Minor prevailed in the women’s open singles, besting five other players. The 14-year-old netter started her bid for the championship with a 6-1, 6-2 triumph over Lee Eun Kyoung in the semis before walking away with a 6-0, 6-0 win over Lydia Tan in the finals.

Tan won two matches to set up a title tiff against Minor, beating Matty Buenaventura, 9-8 (7-5) and Jodel Fernandez (walkover).

In the men’s 3.0 singles, another junior player won the championship with Lopez downing fellow junior netter Negahr Rastguiy, 6-0, 6-0. Lopez impressively won the women’s 3.0 crown without losing a set. She shutout Emily Jones in the first round, 8-0, and then blanked Jeane Bracken in the semis, 6-0, 6-0.

In the men’s 4.0 singles fi-

“There were some spots today, I don’t know how I got out,” he said. “But I was happy to go ahead and hit some lucky shots and good shots, and get away with it.”

Molder hit his share of errant tee shots, too, after a solid 66 on Friday. He made three bogeys on the front nine, then birdied two of the first three holes on the back.

He dunked his tee shot in the water on 18, then hit a 6-iron to 14 feet and made the putt for an unexpected par. Molder had seven one-putt greens on the back nine and a total of 26 putts in his round.

“Luckily, my putter kind of held me in there,” Molder said. “I always kind of know that if I can just kind of get it going the direction I want it to go, then I’m usually going to be OK.”

nals, Miller nearly shut out Gary Ramsey, as the former won, 6-1, 6-0. Miller had a more difficult semis victory when he topped Bong Gamab, 6-4, 7-5. Ramsey won the other semis game against Mike Jang, 7-5, 7-5.

In the men’s singles finals, Lee defeated the cramping Art Borromeo. Lee took the first set, 6-1, and was leading in the second set, 3-1, when Borromeo, playing his second match of the day, decided to throw in the towel due to cramps.

The last weekend of the two-week netfest also had competitions in doubles with the pair of Isabel Heras and Carol Lee winning the girls’ 10-and-under dou-

bles, Lopez and Rastguiy ruling the girls’ 14-and-under, Daniel Park and Angelo Jones topping the boys’ 14-and-under, and Jorge Olanda and Theecel Minor claiming the mixed 3.0 doubles title.

Heras and Lee swept their two games in the round-robin girls’ 10-and-under doubles, while Lopez and Rastguiy whipped Emily Jones and Bracken in the girls’ 14-and-under finals, 8-3.

In the boys 14-and-under finals, Angelo Jones and Park edged Colin Ramsey and Chris Park, 6-1, 6-2, while Theecel Minor and Olanda won over Dodong Salinas and Mimi Castro in the mixed .30 doubles finals, 6-3, 6-0.

Around 1,500 athletes and officials are expected to participate in the 2010 Micronesia Games, which has “Tia de Prerii,” as its theme. The theme means “we can make it happen,” with Palau determined to deliver the Games despite the many challenges it faced and will continue to face.

In Palau, the CNMI is hoping to improve its 98-medal output. In 2006 edition of the Micro Games

held on Saipan, the CNMI placed runner-up to Guam. The CNMI got the most medals with 98, but tallied only 34 gold, 33 silver, and 31 bronze. Guam had a 51-27-18 tally. Palau was third with its 27 gold, 16 silver, and 21 bronze medals. Chuuk claimed six gold, 10 silver, and 12 bronze, Pohnpei had a 5-15-17 tally, Kiribati had 5-7-5, the Marshall Islands had 3-5-12, Kosrae had 3-3-2, and Yap had 2-7-3.

crusis 35, Sablan 21, Maliwanag 16, Sison 14, Lee 12, McCale 3, Bustillos 2.

**Scoring by quarters:** 30-31, 54-58, 81-83, 112-105.

**Second Game**  
**PIC 90** – Abuy 25, Jung 20, Baculod 14, Williams 14, Barbo 9, Dacanay 4, Pepito 2, Danipog 2.  
**Hard Rock 84** – Tengco 20, Paraiso 16, Mendoza 16, Daprosa 13, Perez 4, Sablan 4, Besmonte 4, Aranda 3, Mabutas 2, Alcantara 2.  
**Scoring by quarters:** 25-18, 42-47, 68-71, 90-84.

**Strikers 65** – Camacho 25, Corotan 11, Banayat 9, Basa 7, Herrera 2, Echaluze 2, Quinto 2.  
**Managaha 50** – Domingo 11, C. Samson 10, Banzagale 8, P. Samson 7, Vergara 5, Moreno 4.  
**Scoring by quarters:** 22-7, 34-19, 46-33, 65-50.

## HEO

From Page 28

change with his much younger foe in the opening set. The 18-year-old Heo defeated the 30-year-old Schuler in the remaining two sets, 6-3, 6-3.

“I knew I can survive a long game because I am fitter than Kirk. In the last two sets, I also leaned on my service game. I was a bit consistent with my service and that helped me through,” said Heo in a telephone interview a few minutes after his more than three hours game against Schuler concluded yesterday on the PIC hard court.

## MICRO

From Page 28

monwealth’s delegates.

At the NMASA monthly meeting, several sports organizations had given initial numbers for the Micro Games. Northern Marianas Athletics is looking at having 20 athletes and five officials, baseball has 26 athletes and officials, basketball has 30,

canoe has 25, spear fishing has six, tennis has 10, triathlon has three, and table tennis has four.

Fifteen sports are lined up for the Micronesia Games’ calendar: baseball, basketball, lawn tennis, swimming, triathlon, athletics, Micro All-Around, outrigger canoe, spear-fishing, fast-pitch softball, table tennis, weightlifting, beach volleyball, indoor volleyball, and wrestling. Majority of the venues for

the paint. David pulled up for a shot, lost his balance, but made the basket and drew a foul from Marlon Sison.

David completed the 3-point play, giving MBI more breathing space, 108-103, and Barbo made it a 110-103 count after drilling a reverse layup off a SGH/Docomo error to seal the win.

The defending champion improved to an 8-1 record, a win ahead of World Resort and Aqua Resort, which are tied in second place with identical 7-2 marks.

In the second game, Pacific Islands Club edged Hard Rock

Café, 90-84.

James Abuy and Woon Joo Jung carried the cudgels for PIC in absence of their two key players. Abuy finished with a game-high 25 points, logging nine of them in the fourth to make up for Ryan Sanciango’s absence.

Jung chipped in 20, drilling seven in the final period and giving PIC the needed presence in the paint, as the team was without Darwin Barbo in the first half.

Barbo reported in the game in the second half and tallied six of his nine points in the fourth to help PIC recover from a 68-71 deficit in the third. Guards

it moved within eight, 40-48. However, a triple from Banayat, who just reported back into the game, brought things back in order for Strikers.

Another Strikers triple, this time from Resty Corotan, widened the gap further, ensuing the

team’s second win in six games. Corotan was the other Strikers player to score in double figures with his 11 markers.

Roy Domingo led Managaha’s losing cause, firing 11 markers, while Carl Samson added 10.

## STRIKERS

From Page 28

hang on to a double-digit lead at the break, 34-19, with J.B. Banayat making the team’s last five markers in that canto.

it didn’t feel very good, where I was uncomfortable out there and hit some poor shots. All you can do is just be ready for that, handle it as well as you can.”

Justin Leonard (67) moved into contention in the morning with two eagles on his front nine. He made a double bogey on the 14th hole, though, and dropped into the logjam at 6 under.



### TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

#### NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
y-Boston	47	28	.627	—
Toronto	38	37	.507	9
New York	26	49	.347	21
Philadelphia	26	50	.342	21 1/2
New Jersey	11	65	.145	36 1/2
Southeast Division				
x-Orlando	53	23	.697	—
x-Atlanta	49	27	.645	4
Miami	43	34	.558	10 1/2
Charlotte	40	36	.526	13
Washington	22	53	.293	30 1/2
Central Division				
z-Cleveland	60	16	.789	—
Milwaukee	42	34	.553	18
Chicago	37	39	.487	23
Indiana	28	48	.368	32
Detroit	23	53	.303	37

WESTERN CONFERENCE				
Southwest Division				
x-Dallas	50	27	.649	—
x-San Antonio	46	29	.613	3
Memphis	39	36	.520	10
Houston	38	37	.507	11
New Orleans	35	43	.449	15 1/2
Northwest Division				
x-Denver	50	27	.649	—
x-Utah	50	27	.649	—
x-Oklahoma City	47	28	.627	2
x-Portland	47	30	.610	3
Minnesota	15	61	.197	34 1/2

Pacific Division				
y-L.A. Lakers	55	21	.724	—
x-Phoenix	50	27	.649	5 1/2
L.A. Clippers	27	49	.355	28
Sacramento	24	53	.312	31 1/2
Golden State	22	53	.293	32 1/2
x-clinched playoff spot				
y-clinched division				
z-clinched conference				

Yesterday’s Games	
Toronto 128, Philadelphia 123, OT	
Atlanta 91, Detroit 85	
New Jersey 115, New Orleans 87	
Chicago 96, Charlotte 88	
Miami 97, Minnesota 84	
Oklahoma City 121, Dallas 116	
Milwaukee 107, Phoenix 98	
Denver 98, L.A. Clippers 90	
Portland 98, Sacramento 87	

#### BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

#### LOCAL SCORES

SHIRLEY’S STANDINGS	
MBI	8 1
World Resort	7 2
Aqua Resort	7 2
Mobil	7 3
TBK	6 3
Pacific Islands Club	6 3
Fiesta Resort	5 4
Shirley’s	4 4
AON/NJ Plus	4 3
Bank of Guam	3 4
McGraw-Hill	3 4
Pepsi	2 4
Docomo/SGH	0 8
Hard Rock	0 8
Cell Pro	0 9

NAVY HILL STANDINGS	
Division A	
Rollers	7 0
Diamond	6 0
Sonics	5 1
Lynn’s BBQ	3 4
Torch Bearers	2 3
Moonlight	2 4
Tropical Laundry	2 4
Viel’s	2 2
Koi Bar	1 2
Star Water	0 3
Morales Team	0 5

Division B	
DL Cooking Gas	5 0
QQ Rent	4 3
NVM	3 2
Grillin’	3 2
GEC	2 2
Pacific Pawnshop	2 2
Sparks	2 1
Strikers	2 4
Managaha	1 6
Mix Blood	1 2
MTV Construction	0 4



# The Week in Sports

## Youth cagers, netters prove worth

By **ROSELYN B. MONROYO**  
roselyn\_monroyo@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

**A**fter visiting athletes put on a show for about a month, it was the local talents' turn to make it to the spotlight last week.

Leading the list were the Commonwealth's high school basketball players, who competed in the 2010 Settsu-Saipan Friendship Basketball Tournament. The tournament had Saipan's boys U17 and girls

U15 players challenging cagers from Settsu Red Impulse of Osaka, Japan.

After the two-day tournament, the MISO All-Stars dominated the youth caging. The MISO All-Stars won over the COPSSA All-Stars in the boys U17 finals, 77-74, while in the girls U15 finals, the MISO All-Stars prevailed over erstwhile champion Settsu, 75-54.

Other teams that joined the girls U15 were the COPSSA All-Stars and Kagman High School. Settsu also entered a squad in the boys U17, joining Southern

High School, MISO All-Stars, and COPSSA All-Stars.

MISO's Lia Rangamar, Nikita Hofschneider, Juan Maratita, and Christian Mizer and COPSSA's Kaylani Lebria and Sean Sablan were named top performers in the tournament.

Youth talents were also showcased in the first week of the 10th Annual PIC Tennis Championships.

In the boys U18 singles finals, Christian Miller swept Nathan Nutting, 6-0, 6-3. Other winners in the junior singles events were Thea Minor, Jake Lee, Mikayla

Lopez, Moris Villanueva, and Sakura Imaya.

In the adults doubles, winning their respective division were the tandems of Ji Hoon Heo and Kirk Schuler, Eli Buenaventura and Roy Pangelinan, Jake Lee and Daniel Park, Sakiko Eda and Kasumi Imai, and Thea Minor and Cleofe Santos.

While youth netters and cagers were at their best last in the San Antonio court and Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium, respectively, Japanese professional wrestler had their rare appearance in Marpi. Sixteen Japanese

pro wrestlers wowed the Saipan crowd with their fighting and acting skills in a makeshift ring in Marpi.

Over at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios and Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfields, Saipan Little League Baseball continued with its regular season games with the defending Majors champion Ol'Aced keeping their unbeaten record. Also holding an undefeated mark are Junior League defending champions Docomo Patriots.

Still in baseball, the Rangers

remained perfect in the Saipan Major League with their 5-0 record, following a second-round victory over the Fielders, 10-2.

Other leagues on Saipan had their games halted due to rain and to observe the Holy Week.

The Chamolinian softball league at the Capital Hill Ballfield had games only last Monday, as it took a break on Friday and matches were rained-out on Wednesday.

Matches in Navy Hill and Shirley's cagings on Wednesday were rained-out and there were no games on Friday.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Steven Goodwin, left, and Michael Ren, pose for a photo after completing their boys U10 singles game in the PIC tennis tournament on March 27 on the PIC hard court. Goodwin won, 8-6.



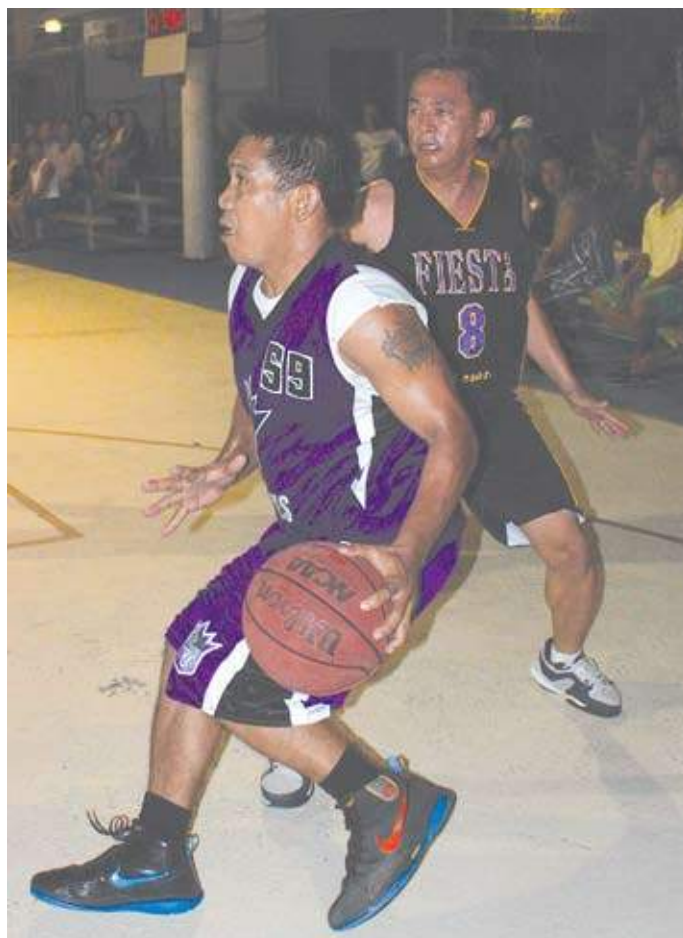
ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Jake Lee serves against Art Borrero during their men's 3.0 singles finals game in the PIC tennis tournament yesterday on the PIC hard court. Lee won, 6-1, 3-1 (retired).



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

COPSSA All-Star and GCA's Julie Muna, left, tries to dribble out of the defense of MISO All-Stars and MHS' Reylynn Sapong during their game in the Settsu-Saipan caging last week at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

TBK's Jun Pantaleon, left, eludes the defense of Fiesta's Mico Moran during their game in the Shirley' caging last Monday at the JP Center Basketball Court.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Sumo wrestler Hama Ryota and Kojima Satoshi in action during one of the featured fights in Marpi.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Kono Masayuki sits on top of Nakanoueno Yasufumi while the referee makes a count during their wrestling bout in Marpi on March 27.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

COPSSA All-Star and Mt. Carmel's Jared Sablan pulls up for an off-balanced shot against a Settsu Red Impulse defender during their game in the Settsu-Saipan caging last week at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.





# Saipan Tribune Sports



28 MONDAY, APRIL 5, 2010

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

## Heo outlasts Schuler in three sets

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO  
roselyn\_monroyo@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

**A** fitter and younger Ji Hoon Heo survived a three-set finale against former NCAA Division I player Kirk Schuler in the men's open singles division of the 10th Annual PIC Tennis Championships.

Schuler, a former Drake University standout, got off to a good start and stunned Heo in the closely fought first set, 7-6, (7-4), yesterday at the Pacific Islands Club

hard court. Spectators at center court, where Heo and Schuler were playing, were glued watching the opening set that took more than an hour to finish, as neither player seemed to want to give in before Schuler capitalized on an erratic Heo in the end.

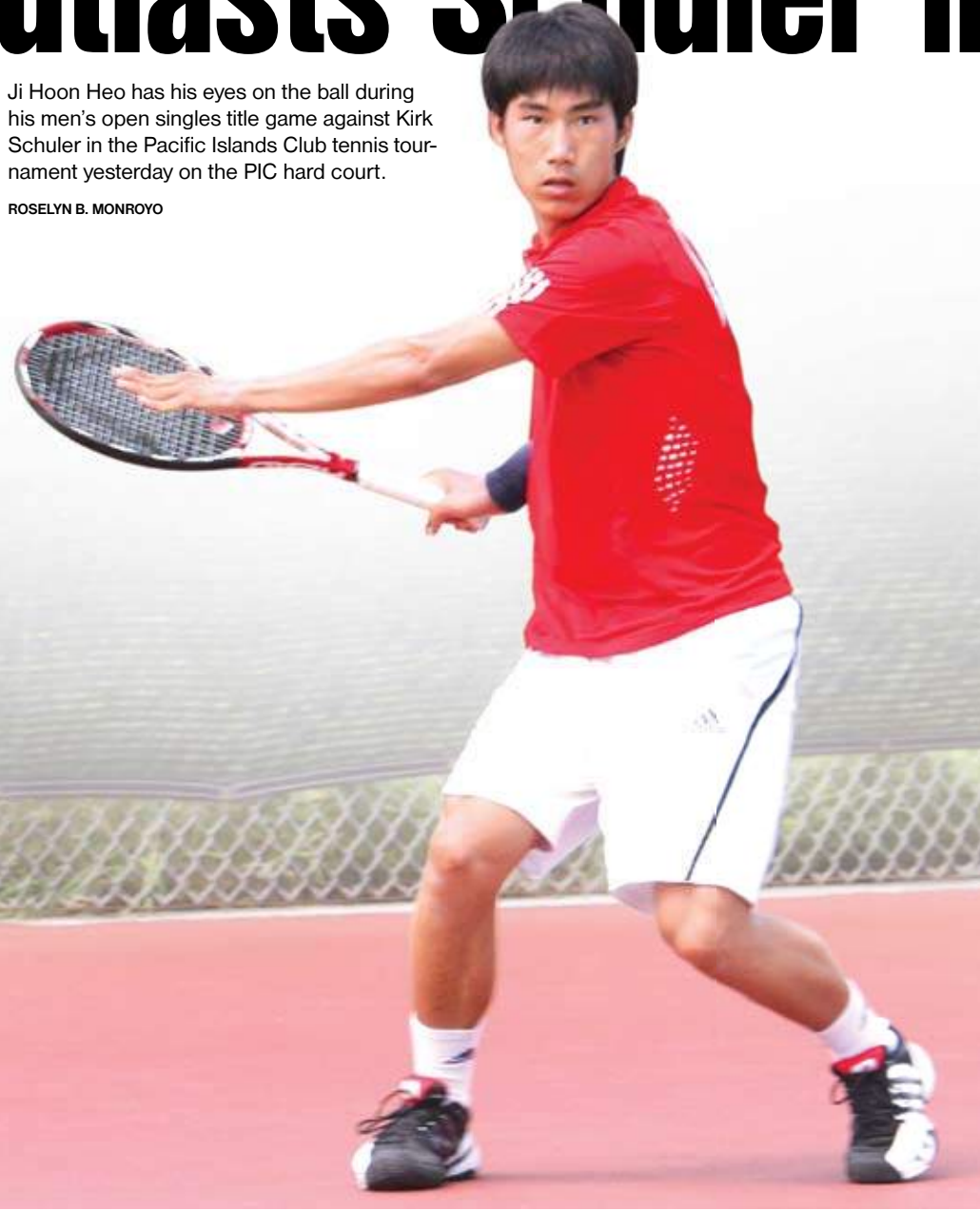
"I did not play smart in the first set and committed several errors. Kirk did a good job in scoring points off my errors in the first set," said Heo, who lost a set to Schuler for the first time in months.

Heo redeemed himself in the last two sets, as Schuler ran out of steam after an exhausting ex-

See HEO on Page 26

Ji Hoon Heo has his eyes on the ball during his men's open singles title game against Kirk Schuler in the Pacific Islands Club tennis tournament yesterday on the PIC hard court.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO



### Micro Games entry deadline this April

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO  
roselyn\_monroyo@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association has set the deadline for the submission of names and numbers of delegates to the 2010 Micronesia Games to end of this month.

During the NMASA monthly meeting last week at the conference room of the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium, NMASA president Michael White instructed the various sports associations to inform NMASA about the

name of athletes and officials going to Palau and the number of the delegation.

White added each sports association should submit a copy of the business page of the athlete/official's passport and two photos for the processing of accreditation papers in Palau.

NMASA must know how many CNMI athletes/officials are participating in the seventh edition of the Micro Games to determine if there's a need to have a charter flight to Palau for the Com-

See MICRO on Page 26



ROSELYN B. MONROYO  
Charlie Cheng in action during a local table tennis tournament last year. Table tennis is one of the sports lined up for the 2010 Micronesia Games in Palau in August.

## MBI regains form, tops SGH/Docomo

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO  
roselyn\_monroyo@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER



Coach Kitz Barja is back and so is his Micronesian

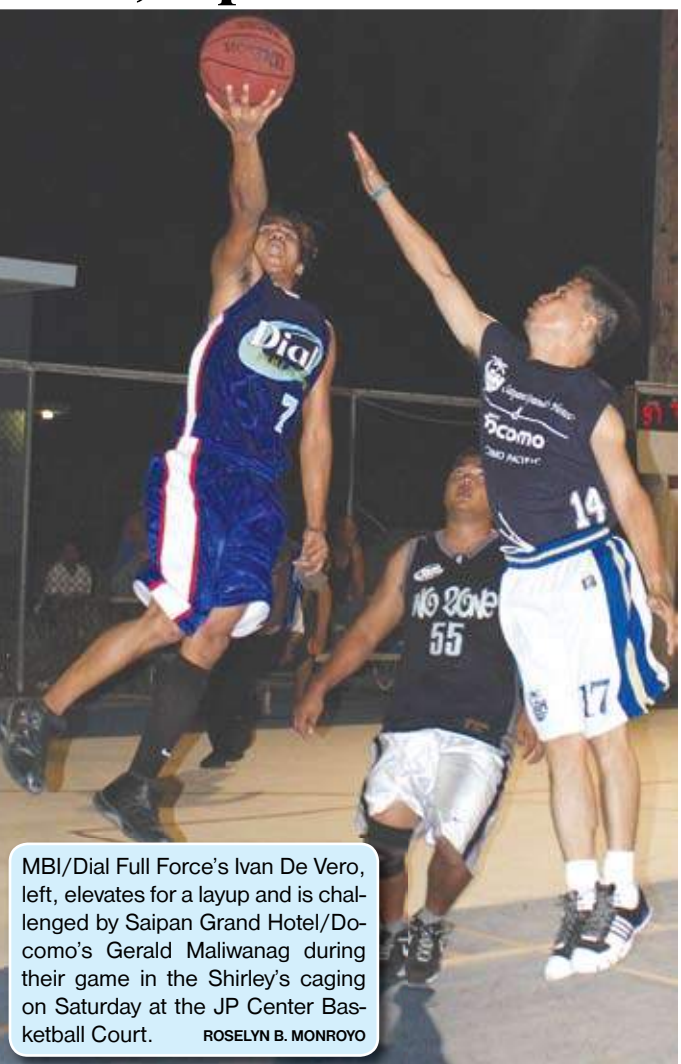
Brokers, Inc./Dial Full Force, which nailed a 112-105 win over Saipan Grand Hotel/Docomo Pacific during their game in the 2nd Annual Shirley's Coffee Shop Invitational Basketball on Saturday at the JP Center Basketball Court.

The victory allowed MBI to quickly recover from a humiliating 74-114 loss at the hands of Pacific Islands Club on March 21. In that defeat, MBI debuted in its new uniform and was without Barja.

MBI then took more than a weeklong break before returning to action with Barja on the bench to give the team the direction it needed, especially against the victory hungry SGH/Docomo.

SGH/Docomo, which is winless in eight games, led most of the way behind James Villacrusis and John Sablan's guns until MBI finally got its act together in the fourth quarter.

See MBI on Page 26



ROSELYN B. MONROYO  
MBI/Dial Full Force's Ivan De Vero, left, elevates for a layup and is challenged by Saipan Grand Hotel/Docomo's Gerald Maliwanag during their game in the Shirley's caging on Saturday at the JP Center Basketball Court.

## Strikers snap skid in Navy Hill caging

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO  
roselyn\_monroyo@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER



Strikers ended their losing skid in the 2010 Navy Hill Friendship Basketball League after whipping Managaha, 65-50, on Saturday at the Garapan Basketball Court.

Before the 15-point victory, Strikers dropped their previous three games. While Strikers' fortunes changed, Managaha's did not, as the latter dropped to a 1-6 record and is at the bottom half of the team standings in Division B of the 22-team league.

Former CNMI Junior Men's Nationals member James Camacho anchored Strikers' win, drilling a game-high 25 points. He scored 12 of Strikers' first 14 points, giving his team a big 22-7 lead at the end of the opening quarter.

Camacho was held to only two points in the second quarter, but Strikers managed to

See STRIKERS on Page 26



ROSELYN B. MONROYO  
Strikers' Manny Basa, left, drives to the baseline against a Managaha defender during their game in the Navy Hill caging on Saturday at the Garapan Basketball Court.